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THE ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS OF SANTILLANE.

A NEW TRANSLATION,

By the Author of RODERICK RANDOM.

Adorned with Twelve new CUTS, neatly engraved.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

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THE

AUTHOR's

DECLARATION.

AS there are ſome people who cannot read without making applications of the vicious and ludicrous characters they meet with in works of this kind, I declare to theſe miſchievous readers, that they will be to blame, if they apply any of the pictures drawn in this book. I publickly own that my purpoſe is to repreſent life as we find it: but God forbid that I ſhould undertake to delineate any man in particular! Let no reader, therefore, aſſume to himſelf that which properly belongs to others, leſt, as Phædrus obſerves, he make an unlucky diſcovery of his own character. *Stulte nudabit animi conſcientiam.* There are phyſicians in Caſtile, as well as in France, whoſe practice conſiſts in evacuating their patients a little too much; and the ſame vices and peculiarities of diſpoſition are to be ſeen every where.

I con-

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I confeſs that I have not always exactly obſerved the manners of the Spaniards; and thoſe who are acquainted with the diſorderly lives of the players at Madrid may reproach me with having deſcribed their irregularities with too much tenderneſs: but I thought it was neceſſary to ſoften them a little, that they might be the more conformable to the manners of our own country.

GIL

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GIL BLAS

TO THE READER.

GENTLE reader, before thou heareſt the hiſtory of my life, give me leave to entertain thee with a ſhort ſtory.

Two ſcholars, in their way from Pennafiel to Salamanca, being thirſty and fatigued, ſat down by a ſpring they met with on the road. There, while they reſted themſelves, after having quenched their thirſt, they perceived, by accident, upon a ſtone that was even with the ſurface of the earth, ſome letters, already half effaced by time, and the feet of flocks that came to water at the fountain: having waſhed it, they read theſe words in the Caſtilian tongue: *Aqui eſtá encerranda el alma del Licenciado Pedro Garcias.* "Here is interred the ſoul of the Licentiate Peter Garcias." The younger of the two ſtudents being a pert coxcomb, no ſooner read this inſcription, than he cried with a loud laugh, "A good joke i'faith! Here is interred the ſoul—a ſoul interred!—Who the devil could be the author of ſuch a wiſe epitaph!" So ſaying, he got up and went away; while his companion, who

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who was bleſſed with a greater ſhare of penetration, ſaid to himſelf, "There is certainly ſome myſtery in this affair: I'll ſtay in order to unriddle it." Accordingly, his comrade was no ſooner out of ſight, then he began to dig with his knife all around the ſtone; and ſucceeded ſo well, that he got it up, and found beneath it a leathern purſe, containing a hundred ducats, and a card, on which was written the following ſentence in Latin, "Whoſoever thou art who haſt wit enough to diſcover the meaning of the inſcription, inherit my money, and make a better uſe of it than I have done." The ſcholar, rejoicing at his good fortune, placed the ſtone in its former ſituation, and walked home to Salamanca with the ſoul of the licentiate.

Of what complexion ſoever thou mayeſt be, friendly reader, thou wilt certainly reſemble one of thoſe two ſcholars: for if thou peruſeſt my adventures, without perceiving the moral inſtructions they contain, thou wilt reap no harveſt from thy labour: but if thou readeſt with attention, thou wilt find in them, according to the precept of Horace, Profit mingled with pleaſure.

THE

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THE ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS OF SANTILLANE.

BOOK I.

CHAP I.

Of the birth and education of Gil Blas.

MY father, Blas of Santillane, after having carried arms many years for the ſervice of the Spaniſh monarchy, retired to the town in which he was born, where he choſe a wife among the ſecond-rate citizens, who, though ſhe was no chicken, brought me into the world ten months after her marriage.—They afterwards removed to Oviedo, where my mother became a waiting-woman, and my father Squire * to

* Squire, or gentleman-uſher, in Spaniſh Eſcudero, is a perſon that waits on a lady. Formerly, decayed gentlemen were entertained by the nobility for this purpoſe. They took their appellation from thoſe eminent ſquires whoſe office was to carry the ſhield (in Spain, called Eſcudo) of their maſter.

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a lady: and as they had nothing but their wages to depend upon, I ſhould have run the hazard of being very poorly educated, had it not been my good fortune to have a canon for my uncle, whoſe name was Gil Peres: he was my mother's eldeſt brother as well as my god-father, a little man, three feet and an half high, exceſſive fat, with his head ſunk between his ſhoulders; otherwiſe an honeſt prieſt, whoſe chief care was to live well; that is to make good cheer; and his living, which was no lean one, furniſhed him with the means.

He carried me home to his houſe while an infant, taking charge of my education; and I appeared ſo ſprightly, that he reſolved to cultivate my genius. With this view he bought for me an horn-book, and undertook (himſelf) to learn me to read; a taſk no leſs uſeful to him than to me: for, in teaching me my letters, he had recourſe to his reading, which he had always neglected too much: and, by dint of application, enabled himſelf to read his breviary without heſitation; a qualification he had never been poſſeſſed of before.—He had all the inclination in the world to inſtruct me in the Latin tongue alſo, becauſe it would have been ſo much money ſaved to him: but, alas, poor Gil Peres! he had never in his life underſtood the rudiments of that language, and was, perhaps, (but this I do not vouch for a certainty) the moſt illiterate canon of the whole chapter.—I have been told

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told, indeed, that he had not obtained his benifice by his erudition; but owed it entirely to the gratitude of ſome pious nuns, for whom he had acted the part of a zealous commiſſioner, and by whoſe influence the order of prieſthood had been conferred upon him without examination.

He was therefore obliged to ſubject me to the birch of a ſchool-maſter, and accordingly ſent me to the houſe of doctor Godinez, who was reckoned the moſt expert flogger in Oviedo. I improved ſo well under his inſtructions, that in five or ſix years I underſtood a little Greek, was a pretty good Latin ſcholar; and applying myſelf alſo to logic, began to argue apace: I was ſo much in love with diſpute, that I ſtopped paſſengers, known, or unknown, and propoſed arguments to them; and ſometimes meeting with Hibernian geniuſes, who were very glad of the occaſion, it was a good jeſt to ſee us diſpute: by our extravagant geſtures, grimace, contortions, our eyes full of fury, and our mouths full of foam, one would have taken us for bedlamites rather than philoſophers.

By theſe means, however, I acquired the reputation of a great ſcholar in town; a circumſtance that pleaſed my uncle extremely, as he foreſaw that I ſhould not be much longer an expence to him.—"Harkee, Gil Blas (ſaid "he to me one day) thou art no longer a "child, and it is high time for a briſk lad of

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" ſeventeen, like thee, to puſh thy fortune in " the world: I am determined to ſend thee to " Salamanca, where, with ſuch genius and " learning, thou canſt not fail of obtaining " ſome good poſt: thou ſhalt have ſome du- " cats in thy pocket to bear thy expences on " the road; and I will give thee my own " mule, which thou mayeſt ſell at Salamanca " for ten or twelve piſtoles, and live upon " the money until thou ſhalt be ſettled to thy " ſatisfaction."

He could not have propoſed any thing more agreeable to me, for I paſſionately longed to ſee the world: nevertheleſs, I had diſcretion enough to conceal my joy; and when the time of my departure arrived, affecting the moſt lively ſorrow at leaving an uncle, to whom I owed ſo many obligations, the honeſt man was melted, and gave me more money than he would have done, could he have ſeen to the bottom of my heart.—Before I ſat out I went to take leave of my father and mother, who enriched me with advice, exhorted me to pray to God for my uncle, to live inoffenſively, to eſchew evil, and by all means to refrain from ſtealing.—After they had held forth a good while, they made me a preſent of their bleſſing, which was all I expected from them; and I, mounting my mule bad adieu to Oviedo.

CHAP.

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CHAP. II.

Of his being grievouſly alarmed in his way to Pennaflor: Of his conduct in that town, with an account of a perſon who ſupped with him.

BEHOLD me then in the open field, clear of Oviedo, on the road to Pennaflor, maſter of my conduct, of a ſorry mule, and forty good ducats, excluſive of ſome royals which I had ſtolen from my much honoured uncle.—The firſt thing I did was to let my beaſt go at diſcretion, that is, very gently; and throwing the bridle on her neck, I emptied my purſe into my hat, and amuſed myſelf in counting my money: my joy was exceſſive; and as I had never ſeen ſo much caſh before, I handled and gazed at it with inſatiable delight.—I had reckoned it, perhaps, twenty times over, when, all of a ſudden, my mule raiſing her head, and pricking up her ears, ſtopped in the middle of the highway. Imagining ſhe was frightened at ſomething, I looked about to ſee what was the matter, and perceived upon the ground an old hat, turned up, with a roſary of great beads in it; at the ſame time heard a lamentable voice pronounce theſe words: "Mr. Tra-

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" veller, for God's ſake, have pity on a poor " maimed ſoldier; drop, if you pleaſe, a few " bits into the hat, and you ſhall be rewarded " in heaven."—I turned my eyes immediately on the ſide from whence the voice iſſued, and ſaw, at the root of a buſh, about twenty or thirty paces from me, a kind of ſoldier, who upon two croſs-ſticks, ſupported the barrel of a carbine, in my apprehenſion longer than a pike, with which he ſeemed to take aim at me: at this apparition, which made me quake for the church's money, I ſtopt ſhort, and, pocketing my ducats in a great hurry, took out ſome rials, approaching the hat, that was expoſed for the reception of extorted charity, and dropped them into it, one after another, that the beggar might ſee how nobly I uſed him.—He was ſatisfied with my bounty, and gave me a benediction for every kick that I beſtowed on the ſides of my mule, in order to get out of his reach; but the plaguy beaſt, regardleſs of my impatience, moved not a ſtep the faſter, having loſt the power of galloping, by a long habit of carrying my uncle at his own leizure.

I did not look upon this adventure as a very favourable omen for my journey; I conſidered that I might meet with ſomething ſtill worſe before I ſhould arrive at Salamanca; and could not help blaming my uncle's imprudence, for having neglected to put me under the direction of a carrier. This, to be ſure, was what he ought to have done, but he imagined

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gined that, by giving me his mule, my journey would be the leſs expenſive; and he had more regard to that conſideration, than to the dangers I might be expoſed to on the road.—In order therefore to repair his miſmanagement, I determined (as ſoon as I ſhould arrive at Pennaflor) to ſell the mule, and take the opportunity of a carrier for Aſtorga, from whence I could tranſport myſelf to Salamanca by the ſame convenience; for, although I had never been out of Oviedo, I was not ignorant of the names of the towns through which I muſt paſs, having informed myſelf of theſe things before I ſet out.

I arrived in ſafety at Pennaflor, and, halting at the gate of an inn that made a tolerable appearance, I no ſooner alighted than the landlord came out, and received me with great civility; he untied my portmanteau with his own hands, and, and throwing it on his ſhoulder, conducted me into a room, while one of his ſervants led my mule into the ſtable.—This inn-keeper, the greateſt talker of the Aſturies, and as ready to relate his own affairs, without being aſked, as to pry into thoſe of another, told me that his name was Andrew Corcuelo; that he had ſerved many years in the king's army, in quality of a ſarjeant; and had quitted the ſervice fifteen months ago, to marry a damſel of Caſtropol, who (tho' ſhe was a little ſwarthy) knew very well how to turn the penny. He ſaid a thouſand other things, which I could have diſpenſed with the

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hearing of, but after having made me his confidant, he thought he had a right to exact the ſame condeſcenſion from me; and accordingly aſked whence I came, whither I was going, and what I was.—I was obliged to anſwer, article by article, becauſe he accompanied every queſtion with a profound bow, and begged me to excuſe his curioſity with ſuch a reſpectful air, that I could not refuſe to ſatisfy him in every particular.—This engaged me in a long converſation with him, and gave me occaſion to mention my deſign, and the reaſons I had for diſpoſing of my mule, that I might take the opportunity of a carrier.—He approved of my intention, though not in a very ſuccinct manner; for he repreſented all the troubleſome accidents that might befall me on the road, he recounted many diſmal ſtories of travellers, and I was afraid he would never have done: he concluded at length, however, telling me, that if I had a mind to ſell my mule, he was acquainted with a very honeſt jockey who would buy her. I aſſured him he would oblige me in ſending for him; upon which he went in queſt of him immediately with great eagerneſs.—It was not long before he returnd with his man, whom he introduced to me as a perſon of exceeding honeſty, and we went into the yard all together, where my mule was produced, and paſſed and repaſſed before the jockey, who examined her from head to foot, and did not fail to ſpeak very diſadvantageouſly of her.

I own

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I own there was not much to be ſaid in her praiſe; but, however, had it been the pope's mule, he would have found ſome defect in her. He aſſured me, that ſhe had all the faults a mule could have; and, to convince me of his veracity, appealed to the landlord, who, doubtleſs, had his reaſons for ſupporting his friend's aſſertions.—"Well (ſaid this "dealer with an air of indifference) how "much money do you expect for this "wretched animal?" After the eulogium he had beſtowed on her, and the atteſtation of Signor Corcuelo, whom I believed to be a man of honeſty and underſtanding, I would have given my mule for nothing; and therefore told him I would rely on his integrity; bidding him appraiſe the beaſt in his own conſcience, and I would ſtand to the valuation. Upon this he aſſumed the man of honour, and replied, that in engaging his conſcience I took him on the weak ſide: in good ſooth, that did not ſeem to be his ſtrong ſide: for inſtead of valuing her at ten or twelve piſtoles, as my uncle had done, he fixed the price at three ducats, which I accepted with as much joy as if I had made an excellent bargain.

After having ſo advantageouſly diſpoſed of my mule, the landlord conducted me to a carrier, who was to ſet out the next day for Aſtorga.—This muleteer let me know, that he would depart before day-break, and promiſed to wake me in time, after we had agreed upon the price, as well for the hire of

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a mule as for my board on the road; and when every thing was ſettled between us; I returned to the inn with Corcuelo, who, by the way, began to recount the carrier's hiſtory; he told me every circumſtance of his character in town, and, in ſhort, was going to ſtupify me again with his intolerable loquacity, when, luckily for me, a man of a pretty good appearance prevented my misfortune, by accoſting him with great civility. —I left them together, and went on, without ſuſpecting that I had the leaſt concern in their converſation.

When I arrived at the inn I called for ſupper, and, it being a meagre day, was fain to put up with eggs; which while they got ready, I made up to my landlady, whom I had not ſeen before; ſhe appeared handſome enough, and withal ſo ſprightly and gay, that I ſhould have concluded (even if her huſband had not told me ſo) that her houſe was pretty well frequented.—When the amlet I had beſpoke was ready, I ſat down to table by myſelf; and had not yet ſwallowed the firſt morſel when the landlord came in, followed by the man who had ſtopped him in the ſtreet. This cavalier, who wore a long ſword, and ſeemed to be about thirty years of age, advanced towards me with an eager air, ſaying, "Mr. "Student, I am informed that you are that "Signor Gil Blas of Santillane, who is the "link of philoſophy, and ornament of Ovie-"do! Is it poſſible that you are that mirror "of

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" of learning, that ſublime genius, whoſe " reputation is ſo great in this country?—You " know not (continued he, addreſſing him- " ſelf to the inn-keeper and his wife) you " know not what you poſſeſs! You have a " treaſure in your houſe! Behold, in this " young gentleman, the eighth wonder of the " world!" Then turning to me, and throw- ing his arms about my neck, " Forgive (cried " he) my tranſports! I cannot contain the " joy that your preſence creates!"

I could not anſwer for ſome time, becauſe he locked me ſo cloſe in his arms, that I was almoſt ſufficated for want of breath; and it was not till I had diſengaged my head from his embrace, that I replied; " Signor Cava- " lier, I did not think my name was known " at Pennaflor."——" How! known (re- " ſumed he in his former ſtrain) we keep a " regiſter of all the celebrated names within " twenty leagues of us:—You, in particular, " are looked upon as a prodigy, and I don't " at all doubt that Spain, will one day be as " proud of you, as Greece was of her ſeven " ſages." Theſe words were followed by a freſh hug, which I was enforced to endure, though at the riſk of ſtrangulation. With the little experience I had, I ought not to have been the dupe of his profeſſions and hyperbo- lical compliments: I ought to have known, by his extravagant flattery, that he was one of thoſe paraſites which abound in every town; and who, when a ſtranger arrives, introduce

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themſelves to him, in order to fill their bellies at his expence: but my youth and vanity made me judge quite otherwiſe: my admirer appeared to me ſo much of a gentleman, that I invited him to take a ſhare of my ſupper. "Ah! with all my ſoul (cried he) I am too "much obliged to my kind ſtars for having "thrown me in the way of the illuſtrious Gil "Blas, not to enjoy my good fortune as long "as I can! I have no great appetite (pur-"ſued he) but I will ſit down to bear you "company, and eat a mouthful, purely out "of complaiſance."

So ſaying, my panegyriſt took his place right over-againſt me, and, a cover being laid for him, attacked the amlet as voraciouſly as if he had faſted three whole days: by his complaiſant beginning I foreſaw that our diſh would not laſt long, and therefore ordered a ſecond; which they dreſſed with ſuch diſpatch, that it was ſerved juſt as we—or rather he—had made an end of the firſt.—He proceeded on this with the ſame vigour, and found means, without loſing one ſtroke of his teeth, to overwhelm me with praiſes during the whole repaſt, which made me very well pleaſed with my ſweet ſelf.—He drank in proportion to his eating; ſometimes to my health, ſometimes to that of my father and mother, whoſe happineſs in having ſuch a ſon as me he could not enough admire.—In the mean time he plied me with wine, and inſiſted upon my doing him juſtice, while I toaſted health for

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for health; a circumſtance which, together with his intoxicating flattery, put me into ſuch good humour, that ſeeing our ſecond amlet half devoured, I aſked the landlord if he had no fiſh in the houſe. Signor Corcuelo, who, in all likelihood, had a fellow feeling with the paraſite, replied, "I have a delicate trout, "but thoſe who eat it muſt pay for the ſauce: "—'tis a bit too dainty for your palate, I "doubt."—"What do you call too dainty? "(ſaid the ſycophant, raiſing his voice) you're "a wiſeacre, indeed! Know that there is no- "thing in this houſe too good for Signor Gil "Blas, de Santillane, who deſerves to be en- "tertained like a prince."

I was pleaſed at his laying hold of the land-lord's laſt words, in which he prevented me, who finding myſelf offended, ſaid with an air of diſdain "Produce this trout of your's "gaffer Corcuelo, and give yourſelf no trouble "about the conſequence."—This was what the inn-keeper wanted: he got it ready, and ſerved it up in a trice. At ſight of this new diſh I could perceive the paraſite's eyes ſparkle with joy; and he renewed that complaiſance —I mean for the fiſh—which he had already ſhown for the eggs. At laſt, however, he was obliged to give out, for fear of accident, being crammed to the very throat: having therefore eaten and drank his bellyful, he thought proper to conclude the farce by riſing from table, and accoſting me in theſe words "Signor Gil Blas, I am too well ſatisfied "with

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" with your good cheer to leave you, with-
" out offering an important advice, which
" you ſeem to have great occaſion for: hence-
" forth beware of praiſe, and be upon your
" guard againſt every body you do not know.
" You may meet with other people inclined
" to divert themſelves with your credulity,
" and perhaps to puſh things ſtill farther;
" but don't be duped again, nor believe your-
" ſelf (though they ſhould ſwear it) the eighth
" wonder of the world."—So ſaying, he laughed in my face and ſtalked away. I was as much affected by this bite as I have ſince been by misfortunes of far greater conſequence.—I could not forgive myſelf for having been ſo groſly impoſed upon; or rather, I was ſhocked to find my pride ſo humbled:
" How! (ſaid I to myſelf) has the traitor
" then made a jeſt of me? His deſign in
" accoſting my landlord in the ſtreet was
" only to pump him: or perhaps they un-
" derſtand one another! Ah! ſimple Gil Blas!
" Go hang thyſelf for ſhame, for having given
" ſuch raſcals an opportunity of turning thee
" into ridicule! I ſuppoſe they will trump up
" a fine ſtory of this affair, which will reach
" Oviedo, and doubtleſs do thee a great deal
" of honour; and make thy parents repent
" their having thrown away ſo much good
" council on an aſs: inſtead of exhorting me
" not to wrong any body, they ought to have
" cautioned me againſt the knavery of the
" world!" Chagrined with theſe mortifying re-

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reflections, and inflamed with reſentment, I locked myſelf in my chamber, and went to bed, where, however, I did not ſleep; for, before I could cloſe my eyes, the carrier came to let me know that he was ready to ſet out, and only waited for me: I got up inſtantly, and while I put on my clothes Corcuelo brought me a bill, in which, I aſſure you, the trout was not forgotten: and I was not only obliged to gratify his exorbitance, but I had alſo the mortification to perceive, while I counted the money, that the ſarcaſtick knave remembered my adventure. After having paid ſauce for a ſupper, which I had ſo ill digeſted, I went to the muleteer with my bags, wiſhing the paraſite, the inn-keeper, and his inn, at the devil.

CHAP. III.

Of the carrier's temptation on the road, and its conſequence—How Gil Blas, in attempting to get out of the frying pan, fell into the fire.

I Was not the only perſon who travelled with the carrier, there being in company two children belonging to a gentleman at Pennaflor, a little ſtrolling ballad-ſinger of Mondonedo, and a young tradeſman of Aſtorga, who was bringing home a girl whom he had married at Verco. We became acquainted with one another preſently, and every one, in a very ſhort time, told whence he came, and whither he was going.—The new married lady

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lady was ſo ſtupid and tawny, that I had no great pleaſure in looking at her; but her youth and plumpneſs had a different effect upon the carrier, who reſolved to make an attempt upon her inclinations: He ſpent the whole day in projecting this noble deſign, the execution of which he deferred until we ſhould arrive at our laſt ſtage, which happened to be at Cacabelos. He accordingly made us alight at the firſt inn we came to, a houſe ſituated rather in the country than the town, the landlord of which he knew to be a complaiſant and diſcreet perſon. He took care to have us conducted into a remote apartment, where he allowed us to ſup in tranquillity; but when our meal was ended, he entered with a furious loook, crying "Blood and oons! "I am robbed of one hundred piſtoles, which "I had in a leathern bag, and I muſt find "them immediately; otherwiſe I will apply "to the magiſtrate of the place, who is no "joker in theſe matters, and have you all put "to the rack, 'till ſuch time as you confeſs "the crime and reſtore the money." Having pronounced theſe dreadful words with a very natural air, he went out, leaving us all in the utmoſt conſternation.

As we were ſtrangers to each other, none of us had the leaſt ſuſpicion of the fineſſe; for my own part, I ſuſpected that the poor ballad-ſinger had done the deed; and perhaps he had the ſame opinion of me. Beſides, we were all raw fools, utterly ignorant of the for-

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formalities uſed in ſuch caſes, and believed in good earneſt, that the proceſs would be begun by putting us all to torture.—Giving way therefore to our fear, we evacuated the room in a great hurry, ſome running into the ſtreet, others flying into the garden, and every one betaking himſelf to his heels for ſafety. Among the reſt the young tradeſman of Aſtorga, as much ſcared as any of us at the thoughts of the torture, made his eſcape, like another Æneas, without incommoding himſelf with his wife.—It was then that the carrier (as I have ſince learned) more incontinent than his mules, and overjoyed to ſee his ſtratagem ſucceed according to his expectation, went to the bride, boaſted of his own ingenuity, and endeavoured to profit by the occaſion:—but this Lucrece of the Auſtries, to whom the villanous aſpect of her temtper lent new ſtrength, made a vigorous reſiſtance, and ſcreamed moſt powerfully. The patrole, which happened at that inſtant to paſs by the houſe, that they knew deſerved their attention, went in and demanded the reaſons of thoſe cries: upon which the landlord, who ſat ſinging in the kitchin, and pretended to know nothing of the matter, was obliged to conduct the officer and his guard into the chamber of the perſon who made the noiſe.—They arrived very ſeaſonably; the chaſte Aſturian being quite exhauſted; and the commander (who was none of the moſt delicate people in the world) perceiving what was the matter, gave the amorous muleteer

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teer a wooden ſalutation with the handle of his halbert, addreſſing him at the ſame time in terms as inconſiſtent with modeſty as the action that ſuggeſted them.—This was not all: he apprehended the criminal, and carried him before the judge, together with his accuſer; who, notwithſtanding her diſorder, would have gone of herſelf to crave juſtice for the outrage that was committed upon her. The magiſtrate having heard, and attentively conſidered the cauſe, found the defendant guilty, cauſed him to be ſtripped and ſcourged in his preſence; and ordered that if the huſband of the plantiff ſhould not appear before next day, ſhe ſhould be eſcorted to Aſtorga by two horſemen at the charge of the delinquent.

As for me, more terrified, perhaps, than the reſt, I got into the country, and croſſing, I don't know how many fields and heaths, and leaping all the ditches I found in my way, I arrived at laſt at the ſide of a wood, and was juſt going into it, with a view of concealing myſelf in ſome thicket, when, all of a ſudden two men on horſeback appeared before me, and called, "Who goes there?" As my ſurpriſe hindered me from making immediate anſwer, they advanced, and each clapping a piſtol to my throat, commanded me to tell who I was, whence I came, my buſineſs in that foreſt, and above all things, to hide nothing from them.—To theſe interrogations, the manner of which ſeemed to me equal to the rack with which the carrier had

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had threatened us, I replied, that I was a lad of Oviedo, going to Salamanca; recounted the alarm we had undergone, and confeſſed, that the fear of being put to the torture had induced me to run away.--They burſt out into a loud laugh at this diſcovery, which manifeſted the ſimplicity of my heart; and one of them ſaid, "Take courage friend; come "along with us, and fear nothing: we will "put thee in a place of ſafety." So ſaying, he made me get up behind him, and then we retreated into the wood.

Though I did not know what to make of this recounter, I did not preſage any thing bad from it; for (ſaid I to myſelf) if theſe people were thieves, they would have robbed, and perhaps murdered me, at once: they muſt certainly be honeſt gentlemen, who live hard by, and who, ſeeing me in a panic, have pity on my condition, and carry me home with them out of charity—But I did not long remain in ſuſpence; for, after ſeveral windings and turnings, which we performed in great ſilence, we came to the foot of a hill, where we alighted; and one of the horſemen ſaid to me, "This is our dwelling-"place." I looked around, but could perceive neither houſe, hut, nor the leaſt appearance of any habitation: nevertheleſs theſe two men lifted up a huge wooden trap-door, covered with earth and brambles, which concealed the entrance of a long ſhelving paſſage under ground, into which the horſes went of them-

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themſelves, like beaſts that were uſed to it; while the cavaliers, taking the ſame path, made me follow them: then lowering the cover, with cords faſtened to the inſide for that purpoſe, behold the worthy kinſman of my uncle Peres, caught like a mouſe in a trap.

CHAP. IV.

A deſcription of the ſubterranean habitation, and of what Gil Blas obſerved therein.

I Now diſcovered my ſituation, and any one may eaſily believe that this diſcovery effectually diſpelled my former fear: a terror more mighty and better founded took poſſeſſion of my ſoul! I laid my account with loſing my life as well as my ducats; and looking upon myſelf as a victim led to the altar, walked (more dead than alive) between my two conductors, who, feeling me tremble, exhorted me in vain to fear nothing.—When we had gone about 200 paces, turning and deſcending all the way, we entered into a ſtable, lighted by two great iron lamps, hanging from the arch above. Here I ſaw plenty of ſtraw, and a good many caſks full of provender: there was room enough for twenty horſes; but at that time there were only the two that we brought along with us, which an old negro, who ſeemed vigorous for his years, was tying to a rack.—We went out of the ſtable, and by the diſmal glimmer of ſome lamps, that ſeemed to enlighten the place, only

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only to ſhow the horrors of it, came to a kitchin, where an old cook-maid was buſy in broiling ſteaks, and providing for ſupper.—The kitchin was adorned with all neceſſary utenſils, and hard by there was a larder ſtored with all ſorts of proviſions.—The cook (for I muſt draw her picture) was a perſon ſomewhat turned of ſixty: in her youth the hair of her head had been red as a carrot; for time had not as yet ſo much bleached it, but that one might ſtill perceive ſome ſhades of its primitive colour: ſhe had an olive complexion, a chin pointed and prominent, with lips fallen in, a huge aquiline noſe that hung over her mouth, and eyes that flamed in purple.

"Well, dame Leonarda (ſaid one of the "gentlemen, preſenting me to this fair angel "of darkneſs) here's a young man we have "brought for you." Then turning to me, and obſerving me pale and diſmayed, "Friend "(ſaid he) baniſh thy fear; we will do thee "no harm—Having occaſion for a ſervant to "aſſiſt our cook-maid, we met with thee, "and happy is it for thee we did: thou ſhalt "here ſupply the place of a young fellow, "who let himſelf die about fifteen days ago: "he was a lad of a very delicate complexion; "but thou ſeemeſt to be more robuſt, and "wilt not die ſo ſoon: indeed thou wilt never "ſee the light of the ſun again; but in lieu "of that, thou ſhalt have good cheer, and a "rouſing fire: Thou ſhalt paſs thy time

"with

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" with Leonarda, who is a very gentle crea-
" ture, and enjoy all thy little conveniences.
" I will ſhew thee (added he) that thou haſt
" not got among beggars." With theſe words he took up a flambeau, and, bidding me follow him, carried me into a cellar, where I ſaw an infinite number of bottles and jars well corked, which (he told me) were filled with excellent wine. He afterwards made me paſs through divers apartments, ſome of which contained bales of linen, others of ſilks and ſtuffs: in one I perceived gold and ſilver, and a great quantity of plate in different cupboards.—Then I followed him into a large hall illuminated by three branches of copper, which alſo gave light to the rooms that communicated with it: here he put freſh queſtions to me; aſked my name and reaſon for leaving Oviedo; and when I had ſatisfied his curioſity in theſe particulars, " Well, Gil Blas, (ſaid
" he) ſince thy deſign in quitting the place
" of thy nativity was to obtain ſome good
" poſt, thou muſt certainly have been born
" with a call upon thy head; becauſe thou
" haſt fallen into our hands.—I have already
" told thee that thou ſhalt live here in affluence and roll upon gold and ſilver: nay
" more, thou ſhalt be ſafe; for ſuch is the
" contrivance of this retreat, that the officers
" of the holy brotherhood may come into the
" wood an hundred times without diſcovering
" it. The entry is unknown to every living
" ſoul, except me and my comrades: per-
" haps

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" haps thou wilt wonder how it could be
" executed without being perceived by the
" people in the neighbourhood! Know then
" my lad, that this is not a work of our hands,
" but was made many years ago: for after
" the Moors had got poſſeſſion of Grenada,
" Arragon, and almoſt the whole of Spain,
" the Chriſtians, rather than ſubmit to the
" yoke of infidels, fled and concealed them-
" ſelves in this country, in Biſcay, and in
" the Aſtures, whither the valiant Don Pela-
" gio retired: fugitives, and diſperſed in
" ſmall numbers, they lived in mountains
" and woods, ſome lurked in caves, and
" others contrived many ſubterranean abodes;
" of which number this is one. Having af-
" terwards been ſo lucky as to drive their
" enemies out of Spain, they returned into
" the towns; and, ſince that time, their re-
" treats have ſerved for aſylums to people of
" our profeſſion. 'Tis true, indeed, the holy
" brotherhood * have diſcovered and deſtroy-
" ed ſome of them; but there are ſtill plenty
" remaining; and (thank heaven) I have
" lived here in ſafety near fifteen years: my
" name is Capt. Rolando: I am the chief of the
" company, and he whom thou ſaweſt with
" me, is one of my gang.

* The holy brotherhood in Spain, called Santa Hermandad was formerly an aſſociation to ſuppreſs robbers in times of civil commotion; and at this day, is an eſtabliſhment kept up through all the kingdoms and provinces of Spain, for the ſame purpoſe.

CHAP.

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CHAP. V.

Of the arrival of more thieves in the ſubterranean habitation, and the agreeable converſation that happened among them.

SIGNOR Rolando had ſcarce done ſpeaking, when ſix new faces appeared in the hall; theſe were the lieutenant with five of the company, who returned loaded with booty, which conſiſted of two hampers full of ſugar, cinnamon, pepper, dried figs, almonds, and raiſins; the lieutenant, addreſſing himſelf to the captain, told him, that he had taken theſe hampers from a grocer of Benavento, whoſe mule he had alſo carried off. When he had given an account of his expedition to his ſuperior, the pillage of the grocer was ordered into the ſtore, and it was unanimouſly agreed to make merry. A table being covered in the great hall, I was ſent back into the kitchen, where dame Leonarda inſtructed me in the nature of my office; and, yielding to neceſſity, (ſince my cruel fate had ſo ordained) I ſuppreſſed my ſorrow, and prepared myſelf for the ſervice of thoſe worthy gentlemen.

My firſt eſſay was on the ſide-board, which I adorned with ſilver cups, and many ſtone-bottles of that good wine which Signor Rolando had praiſed ſo much. I afterward brought in two ragouts, which were no ſooner ſerved, than the whole company ſat down to eat. They began with a good appetite, whil

I ſtood

I ſtood behind, ready to ſupply them with wine; and acquitted myſelf ſo handſomely, that I had the honour to be complimented upon my behaviour. The captain recounted my ſtory in a few words, which afforded a good deal of diverſion, and afterwards obſerved that I did not want merit: but I was at that time cured of my vanity, and could hear myſelf praiſed without danger. Not one of them was ſilent on the ſubject; they ſaid I ſeemed born to be their cup-bearer; that I was worth an hundred of my predeceſſor; and although dame Leonarda (ſince his death) had been honoured with the office of preſenting nectar to thoſe infernal gods, they deprived her of that glorious employment, with which they inveſted me, like a young Ganymede ſucceeding an ancient Hebe.

A great diſh of roaſt meat, ſerved up after the ragouts, finiſhed the repaſt of thoſe gormandizing thieves, who drinking in proportion to their gluttony, ſoon became frolickſome, made a helliſh noiſe, and ſpoke all together: one began a ſtory, another broke a jeſt, a third ſhouted, a forth ſung: ſo that there was nothing but riot and confuſion! At length Rolando, tired of a ſcene in which he was ſo little regarded, called (with a voice that ſilenced the whole company) "Gentle-"men, I have a propoſal to make: inſtead "of ſtunning one another in this manner, by "ſpeaking all together, would it not be bet-"ter to entertain ourſelves like reaſonable

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" creatures? There is a thought come into " my head: ſince the time of our aſſociation, " we have never had the curioſity to know " what families we are derived from, and by " what train of adventures we have been ſe- " verally led to embrace this way of life: as " theſe things ſeem worthy to be known, let " us, for our diverſion, communicate them to " one another." The lieutenant, and the reſt, as if they had ſomething very entertaining to relate, embraced, with great demonſtrations of joy, the propoſal of their chief, who began his own hiſtory in theſe words.

" Gentlemen, you muſt know that I am the only ſon of a rich citizen of Madrid; the day of my birth was celebrated in the family by vaſt rejoicings; my father, pretty well ſtricken in years, was raviſhed at ſight of an heir, and my mother undertook to ſuckle me at her own breaſts: her father, who was ſtill alive, was a good old man, who meddled with nothing but his beads, and recounted his own warlike exploits, having been many years in the army; ſo that becoming inſenſibly the idol of theſe three perſons, I was inceſſantly dandled in their arms. Leſt ſtudy ſhould fatigue me in my tender years, I was allowed to ſpend them in the moſt childiſh amuſements; my father obſerving that children ought not to apply ſeriouſly to any thing, until time ſhould have ripened the underſtanding. In expectation of this maturity, I neither learned to read nor write, but nevertheleſs, made good

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good uſe of my time: for my father taught me a thouſand different games: I became perfectly acquainted with cards, was no ſtranger to dice; and my grandfather filled my head with romantick ſtories of the milatary expeditions in which he had been concerned. He ſung the ſame catches over and over, and when I had got ten or twelve lines by heart, by dint of hearing them repeated for three months together, my memory became a ſubject for admiration to my parents, who ſeemed no leſs ſatisfied with my genius. When profiting by the liberty I enjoyed of ſpeaking what came uppermoſt, I uſed to interrupt their diſcourſe with my nonſenſical prattle—"Ah! what a charming creature it is!" (would my father cry, looking at me with inexpreſſible delight) while my mama overwhelmed me with careſſes, and my old grandſire wept with joy. I committed, in their preſence, the moſt indecent actions with impunity: every thing was forgiven; and in ſhort, they adored me. In the mean time, having attained my twelfth year, without being put to ſchool, a maſter was at length provided: but he received preciſe orders to inſtruct me without uſing any violence, being only permitted to threaten me ſometimes, with a view of inſpiring me with awe. This permiſſion had not the moſt ſalutary effects upon me, who either laughed at his menaces, or, with tears in my eyes, went and complained to my mother and grand-papa of his barbarity.

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barity. It was in vain for the poor devil to deny the accuſation: he was looked upon as a tyrant, and my aſſertion always believed, in ſpite of his remonſtrance. I happened one day to ſcratch myſelf, upon which, ſetting up my pipes, as if he had flayed me, my mother came running in, and turned my maſter out of doors, though he proteſted and took heaven to witneſs, that he had never touched my ſkin.

In the ſame manner I got rid of all my preceptors, until ſuch an one as I wanted preſented himſelf; this was a bachelor of Alcala: an excellent tutor for a perſon of faſhion's child! he was a lover of play, women, and wine, conſequently the fitteſt perſon in the world for me. The firſt thing he ſet about was to gain my affection, in which he ſucceeded, and by theſe means, gained the love of my parents, who left me entirely to his management: indeed they had no cauſe to repent of their confidence; for, in a very little time he made me perfect in the knowledge of the world: by dint of carrying me along with him to the places he frequented, I imbibed his taſte ſo well, that, except in Latin I became an univerſal proficient; and when I found I had no further occaſion for his inſtructions, he went to offer them elſewere.

If during my childhood I had lived pretty freely, it was quite another thing when I became maſter of my own actions: I every moment

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ment ridiculed my parents, who did nothing but laugh at my ſallies, which were the more agreeable, the more inſolence they contained. Mean while I committed all kinds of debauchery, in the company of other young men of the ſame diſpoſition; and as our parents did not ſupply us with money ſufficient to ſupport ſuch a delicious life, every one pilfered what he could, at his own home; but that being alſo inſufficient, we began to rob in the dark; when, unfortunately, the corregidor got notice of us, and would have cauſed us to be apprehended, had we not been informed of his treacherous deſign. Upon which we conſulted our ſafety in flight, and transferred the ſcene of our exploits to the highway. Since which time, gentlemen, God has given me grace to grow old in my profeſſion, in ſpite of the dangers to which it is expoſed."

Here the captain left off ſpeaking, and the lieutenant, taking his turn, began with, "Gentleman, an education quite oppoſite to that of Signor Rolando has, nevertheleſs, produced the ſame effect. My father was a butcher of Toledo, reckoned the greateſt brute in the whole city, and my mother's diſpoſition not much more gentle. While I was a child, they whipped me, as if it had been through emulation, at the rate of a thouſand ſtripes a day: the leaſt fault I committed was attended with the moſt ſevere chaſtiſement; and it was in vain for me to aſk pardon, with tears in my eyes, and proteſt that I was ſorry for

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what I had done; far from being forgiven, I was often punished without a cause; while my father belaboured me, my mother (as if he had not exerted himself) instead of interceeding for her child, frequently came to his assistance. This treatment inspired me with such aversion for my paternal habitation, that I ran away before I had attained my fourteenth year, and taking the road of Arragon, went to Saragosa, subsisting on chariry by the way. There I consorted with beggars, who led a pretty comfortable life; they taught me to counterfeit blindness, to appear lame, and afflict my limbs with fictitious ulcers, &c. In the morning (like players, who disguise themselves in order to appear upon the stage) we prepared ourselves for the different parts we intended to act, and every one ran to his post: in the evening we met again, and enjoyed ourselves all night at the expence of those who had compassion on us in the day. Tired however of living among those wretches, and ambitious of appearing in a higher sphere, I associated myself with some knights of the post, who taught me a great many stratagems; but we were, in a very short time, obliged to quit Saragosa, having quarrelled with a certain justice, whose protection we had enjoyed. Every one took his own course: for my own part, I engaged myself in a company of brave fellows who put travellers under contribution, and liked their manner of living so well, that hitherto, I have never felt the least inclination

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clination to ſeek another: I am therefore, gentlemen, very much obliged to the barbarity of my parents; for, had they treated me a little leſs ſavagely, inſtead of being an honourable lieutenant, I ſhould have been doubtleſs at this day a miſerable butcher."

The next that ſpoke was a young thief, who, ſitting between the captain and lieutenant, ſaid, "Gentlemen, the ſtories we have heard, are neither ſo complicated, nor ſo curious as mine: I owe my being to a peaſant's wife, who lived in the neighbourhood of Seville: three weeks after ſhe had brought me into the world (being ſtill young, handſome, and healthy) it was propoſed to her, to nurſe a man of quality's only ſon lately born in Seville: this propoſal my mother chearfully accepted, and went to fetch the child, which being committed to her care, ſhe no ſooner brought it home to her houſe, then perceiving ſome ſmall reſemblance between us, ſhe was tempted to make me paſs for the infant of quality, in hopes that ſhe ſhould one day be well rewarded by me, for that kind office: my father, who was not more ſcrupulous than his neighbours, approved of the deceit; ſo that after having made us exchange our ſwaddling-clothes, the ſon of Don Rodrigo de Herrera was ſent to another nurſe under my name, and my mother ſuckled me under his.

Notwithſtanding all the fine things that are ſaid of inſtinct and the force of blood, the

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little gentleman's parents ſwallowed the change with great eaſe: they had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of the trick that was played upon them; for, till I was ſeven years old, I was ſcarce ever out of their arms. Their intention being to make me a complete cavalier, all ſorts of maſters were provided; but I had no great inclination for the exerciſes I learned; and ſtill leſs reliſh for the ſciences they explained: I loved much better to game with the ſervants, for whoſe company I frequented the kitchen and ſtable; but play was not long my predominant paſſion; for before I was ſeventeen years of age, I got drunk daily, ſeduced all the women in the houſe, but attached myſelf chiefly to the cookmaid, who ſeemed to merit my principal regard: ſhe was a fat jolly wench, whoſe pleaſantry and fleekneſs pleaſed me much; and I made love to her with ſo little circumſpection, that Don Rodrigo himſelf perceived it. He reprimanded me ſharply, reproached me with the baſeneſs of my inclinations, and, leſt the ſight of this amiable object ſhould render his remonſtrances ineffectual, turned my princeſs out of doors.

I was diſguſted at this piece of conduct, for which I reſolved to be revenged: with this view, I ſtole his lady's jewels, and running in queſt of my fair Helen, who had retired to the houſe of a waſherwoman of her acquaintance, I carried her off, at noon-day, to the end that nobody might be ignorant of my

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my paſſion. That was not all: I conducted her into her own country, where I married her in a ſolemn manner, that I might not only give Herrera the more vexation, but alſo afford ſuch a worthy example to the children of noblemen. Three months after my marriage, I was informed of Don Rodrigo's death; a piece of news I did not receive with indifference; but repairing inſtantly to Seville, in order to demand his eſtate, I found things ſtrangely altered! My mother, who was dead, had been ſilly enough, on her death bed, to confeſs the whole affair, in preſence of the curate of the village, and other credible witneſſes; in conſequence of which, the true ſon of Don Rodrigo was already in poſſeſſion of my place or rather of his own; and had been received with the more joy, on account of their being diſſatisfied with me. Wherefore, having nothing to expect from that quarter, and no longer feeling inclination for my fat ſpouſe, I joined ſome gentlemen of the road, with whom I began my expeditions."

The young robber having ended his ſtory, another informed us, "That he was the ſon of a merchant at Burgos, and, prompted by an indiſcreet devotion, had taken the habit and profeſſed a very auſtere order, from which, in a few years, he apoſtatized." In ſhort, theſe eight higwaymen ſpoke in their turns, and when I had heard them all, I was not at all ſurpriſed to find them together. The diſcourſe was afterwards changed; they brought

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upon the carpet ſeveral projects for the next excurſion: and after having come to a determination, got up from table, in order to go to reſt. Having lighted their wax candles, and withdrawn, I followed captain Rolando into his chamber, where while I helped to undreſs him, "Well, Gill Blas (ſaid he) thou "ſeeſt how we live: we are always merry, "and hatred and envy never get footing "among us: we never have the leaſt quarrel "with one another, but are more united than "a convent of monks: thou wilt, my child "(purſued he) lead a very agreeable life in "this place? for I don't believe thee fool "enough to boggle at living with robbers: "eh! doſt thou think there are any honeſter "people in the world than we; no, my lad, "every one loves to prey upon his fellows; "it is an univerſal principle, though variouſly "exerted: conquerors (for example) ſeize "upon the territories of their neighbours, "people of quality borrow without any in-"tention of repaying; bankers, treaſurers, "exchange-brokers, clerks, and all kinds of "merchants, great and ſmall, are not a whit "more conſcientious. As for your limbs of "the law, I need not mention them; every "body knows what they can do: I muſt own, "however that they are ſomewhat more hu-"mane than we; for we often put innocent "people to death, and they ſometimes ſave "the lives of the guilty."

CHAP.

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CHAP. VI.

Of the attempt of Gil Blas to make his eſcape, and the ſucceſs thereof.

WHEN the captain of the thieves had made his apology for his profeſſion, he went to bed, and I returned into the hall, where I uncovered the table, and put every thing in order; from thence I went into the kitchen, where Domingo (ſo was the old negro called) expected me to ſupper. Though I had no appetite, I ſat down with them; but as I could not eat, and appeared as melancholy as I had cauſe to be ſo, theſe two apparitions, equally qualified, undertook to give me conſolation: "Why do you afflict yourſelf, child? "(ſaid the old lady:) You ought rather to "rejoice at your good fortune.—You are "young, and ſeem to be of an eaſy temper; "conſequently would have been, in a little "time, loſt in the world: there you would "have fallen into the hands of libertines, "who would have engaged you in all manner "of debauchery: whereas here your inno-"cence finds a ſecure haven."—"Dame "Leonarda is in the right (ſaid the old black-"a-moor with great gravity) and let me add, "the world is full of affliction: thank hea-"ven, therefore my friend, for having de-"livered thee all at once from the dangers, "difficulties, and miſery of life."

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I bore their diſcourſe with patience, becauſe to fret myſelf would have done me no ſervice: at laſt Domingo, having eaten and drank plentifully, retired into the ſtable; while Leonarda, with a lamp in her hand, conducted me into a vault, which ſerved as a burying-place to the robbers who died a natural death, and in which I perceived a miſerable truck-bed, that looked more like a tomb than a couch: "Here is your bed-"chamber (ſaid ſhe;) the lad, whoſe place "you have the good fortune to ſupply, ſlept "here as long as he lived among us; and "now that he is dead reſts in the ſame place. "—He ſlipt away in the flower of his age: "I hope you will not be ſo ſimple as to fol-"low his examle." So ſaying, ſhe put the light into my hand, and returned into her kitchen; while I, ſetting the lamp upon the ground, threw myſelf upon the bed, not ſo much in expectation of enjoying the leaſt repoſe, as with a view to indulge my melancholy reflection. "O heavens (cried I,) was "ever deſtiny ſo terrible as mine! I am ba-"niſhed from the ſight of the ſun; and, as "if it was not enough to be buried alive at "the age of eighteen, I am moreover con-"demned to ſerve thieves, to ſpend the day "among highwaymen, and the night among "the dead!" I wept bitterly over theſe ſuggeſtions, which ſeemed to me—and were in effect, extremely ſhocking. A thouſand times I curſed my uncle's deſign of ſending me to Sala-

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Salamanca: I repented of my flying from juſtice at Cacabelos, and even wiſhed I had ſubmitted to the torture.—But recollecting that I conſumed myſelf in vain complaints, to no purpoſe, I began to think of ſome means by which I might eſcape. "What! "(ſaid I to myſelf) is it then impoſſible to de- "liver myſelf! the thieves are aſleep, the "cook-maid and negro will be in the ſame "condition preſently: can't I, while they are "all quiet, by the help of my lamp, find "out the paſſage through which I deſcended "to this infernal abode? 'Tis true, indeed, "I dont think myſelf ſtrong enough to lift "the trap-door that covers the entry; but "however, that I may have nothing to re- "proach myſelf with, I will try: my de- "ſpair will, perhaps, ſupply me with ſtrength, "and who knows but I may accompliſh it?"

Having then projected this great deſign, I got up when I imagined Leonardo and Domingo were at reſt; and taking the lamp in my hand, went out of the vault, recommending myſelf to the ſaints in heaven.—It was not without great difficulty that I found again all the windings of this new labyrinth, and and arrived at the door of the ſtable; where at laſt, perceiving the paſſage I was in ſearch of, I went into it, advancing towards the trap with as much nimbleneſs as joy:—but, alas! in the middle of the entry I met with a curſed iron grate, faſt locked, and conſiſting of ſtrong bars ſo cloſe to one another, that I could ſcarce thruſt

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thruſt my hand between them. I was confounded at the ſight of this new obſtacle, which I had not obſerved when I came in, the grate being then open: I did not fail, however, to feel the bars and examine the lock, which I even attempted to force; when, all of a ſudden, I felt a-croſs my ſhoulders five or ſix hearty thwacks with a bull's pizzle! upon which I uttered ſuch a dreadful yell, that the whole cavern echoed with the ſound; and looking behind me, perceived the old negro in his ſhirt, with a dark lantern in one hand, and the inſtrument of his execution in the other. "Ah ha! Mr. Jackanapes (ſaid he) "you want to make your eſcape, hah? You "muſt not imagine that I am to be caught "napping.—I heard you all the while.—I "ſuppoſe you thought the grate was open, "didn't you?—Know, my boy, that hence-"forth thou ſhalt always find it ſhut; and "that when we detain any body here, againſt "his inclination, he muſt be more cunning "than thou, if he ever gets off."

In the mean timetwo or three of the thieves, ſtarting out of their ſleep at the noiſe of my cries, and believing that the holy brotherhood was coming ſouſe upon them, got up in a hurry and alarmed their companions. In an inſtant all were a-foot, and, ſeizing their ſwords and carabines, advanced half naked to the place where Domingo chaſtiſed me; but they no ſooner underſtood the cauſe of the noiſe they had heard, than their uneaſineſs

was

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was changed into fits of laughter.—" How, " Gil Blas (ſaid the apoſtate thief to me) " thou haſt not been here ſix hours, and " want'ſt to take thy leave of us already! " ſure thou muſt have a great averſion to a " retired life, hah? What would'ſt thou do " if thou wert a Carthuſian friar? Go to bed; " thou art quit for once, on account of the " ſtripes Domingo has beſtowed on thee; but " if ever thou ſhould'ſt make another effort " to eſcape, by St. Bartholomew! we will flay " thee alive." This ſaid, he withdrew; the other thieves retired into their apartments; the old negro, proud of his exploit, returned into his ſtable, and I ſneaked back to my Golgotha, where I ſpent the remaining part of the night in ſighs and tears.

CHAP. VII.

Of the behaviour of Gil Blas, when he could do no better.

DURING the firſt days of my captivity I was like to ſink under the ſorrow that oppreſſed me, and might have been ſaid to die by inches; but at laſt my good genius inſpired me with a reſolution to diſſemble: I affected to appear leſs ſad than uſual: I began to laugh and ſing, though, God knows, with an aching heart. In a word I counterfeited ſo well, that Leonarda and Domingo were deceived, and believed that the bird was at laſt reconciled to his cage.—The robbers were

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were of the ſame opinion; for I aſſumed a gay air when I filled wine for them, and mingled in their converſation, whenever I found an opportunity of acting the buffoon. This freedom, far from diſpleaſing, afforded them diverſion. "Gill Blas (ſaid the captain to me one evening, while I entertained them in this manner) thou haſt done well, my lad, to baniſh thy melancholy: I am charmed with thy wit and humour: I find people are not known all at once; for I did not think thou hadſt been ſo ſprightly and good-natured."

The reſt joined alſo in my praiſe, and appeared ſo well ſatisfied with me, that, taking the advantage of this good diſpoſition, "Gentlemen, (ſaid I) allow me to tell my mind: ſince my abode in this place I find myſelf quite another ſort of a perſon than heretofore. You have diveſted me of the prejudices of education, and I inſenſibly imbibe your diſpoſition: I have a taſte for your profeſſion, and a longing deſire of being honoured with the name of your companion, and of ſharing the dangers of your expeditions." All the company approved of my diſcourſe, and commended my forwardneſs; ſo that it was unanimouſly reſolved to let me ſerve a little longer, in order to approve myſelf worthy, then carry me out in their excurſions; after which I ſhould obtain the honourable place I demanded.

Well,

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Well, then, I was obliged to perſiſt in my diſſimulation, and exerciſe the poſt of cup-bearer ſtill; a circumſtance that mortified me extremely: for my deſign in aſpiring to the honour of becoming a thief, was only to have the liberty of taking the air with the reſt, in hopes that one day I ſhould be able to eſcape from them, in the courſe of their expeditions. This hope alone ſupported my life; but nevertheleſs appeared ſo diſtant, that I tried more than once to baffle the vigilance of Domingo; though it was never in my power, he being always ſo much upon his guard, that I would have defied an hundred Orpheus's to charm ſuch a Cerberus. 'Tis true, indeed, I did not do all that I could have done to beguile him, leſt I ſhould have awakened his ſuſpicion; for he had a hawk's eye over me, and I was obliged to act with the utmoſt circumſpection, that I might not betray myſelf. I therefore reſigned myſelf to my fate, until the time ſhould be expired that was preſcribed by the robbers for receiving me into their gang; and this event I expected as impatiently as if I had been to be enrolled in a liſt of commiſſioners.

Heaven be praiſed! in ſix months that time arrived; when Signor Rolando, addreſſing himſelf to his company ſaid, "Gentlemen, "we muſt keep our words with Gil Blas: "I have no bad opinion of that young fellow, "and I hope we ſhall make ſomething of "him: it is therefore my opinion, that we "carry

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" carry him along with us to-morrow to ga-
" ther laurels on the highway, and uſher him
" into the path of glory." The robbers agreed to their captains propoſal; and to ſhow that they already looked upon me as one of their companions, from that moment diſpenſed with my ſervice, and re-eſtabliſhed dame Leonarda in the office ſhe had loſt on my account. They made me throw away my habit, which conſiſted of a ſorry threadbare ſhort caſſock, and dreſſed me in the ſpoils of a gentleman whom they had lately robbed; after which I prepared for my firſt campaign.

CHAP. VIII.

Gil Blas accompanies the thieves, and performs an exploit on the highway.

IT was in the month of September, when towards the cloſe of the night, I came out of the cavern in company with the robbers, armed like them, with a carabine, two piſtols, ſword, and bayonet, and mounted on a pretty good horſe, which they had taken from the ſame gentleman whoſe dreſs I wore. I had lived ſo long in darkneſs, that when day broke, I was dazzled with the light, which however ſoon became familiar to my eyes.

Having paſſed hard by Ponferrada, we lay in ambuſh in a ſmall wood which bordered on the road to Leon. There we waited, expecting that fortune would throw ſome good luck in our way, when we perceived a Dominican (con-

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(contrary to the cuſtom of theſe good fathers) riding upon a ſorry mule: "God be praiſed, "(cried the captain laughing) there's the *coup* "*d'eſſai* of Gil Blas:—let him go and un- "load that monk, while we obſerve his be- "haviour."—All the reſt were of opinion that this was a very proper commiſſion for me, and exhorted me to acquit myſelf handſome- ly in it. "Gentlemen, (ſaid I) you ſhall be "ſatisfied: I will make that prieſt as bare as "my hand, and bring hither his mule in a "twinkling."—"No, no, (replied Rolando) "ſhe is not worth the trouble: bring us only "the purſe of his reverence; that is all we "expect of thee." For this purpoſe I ſallied from the wood, and made towards the clergy- man, begging heaven all the way to pardon the action I was about to commit. I would gladly have made my eſcape that moment; but the greateſt part of the thieves were better mounted than I, and, had they perceived me running away, would have been at my heels in an inſtant, and entrapped me again in a very ſhort time, or perhaps diſcharged their ca- rabines at me, in which caſe I ſhould have had nothing to brag of.—Not daring there- fore to hazard ſuch a delicate ſtep, I came up with the prieſt, and clapping a piſtol to his breaſt demanded his purſe. He ſtopped ſhort to ſurvey me, and without ſeeming much afraid, "Child (ſaid he) you are very young: "—you have got a bad trade by the hand, "betimes."—"Bad as it is, father (I re- "plied

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" plied) I wiſh I had begun it ſooner."—
" Ah! ſon, ſon (ſaid the good friar, who
" did not comprehend the true meaning of
" my words) what blindneſs!—allow me to
" repreſent to you the miſerable condition"—
" O father (ſaid I, interrupting him haſtily)
" a truce with your morals, if you pleaſe:
" my buſineſs on the highway is not to hear
" ſermons; I want money."—" Money!
" (cried he, with an air of aſtoniſhment) you
" are little acquainted with the charity of the
" Spaniards, if you think people of my cloth
" have occaſion for money while they travel
" in this kingdom. Undeceive yourſelf—
" we are every where chearfully received,
" have lodging and victuals, and nothing is
" aſked in return for our prayers: in ſhort,
" we never carry money about us on the
" road; but confide altogether in Providence."
" That won't go down with me (I replied):
" your dependance is not altogether ſo vi-
" ſionary; for you have always ſome good
" piſtoles in reſerve, to make more ſure of
" Providence. But, my good father (added
" I) let us ha' done: my comrades, who
" are in that wood begin to be impatient;
" therefore throw your purſe upon the ground
" inſtantly, or I ſhall certainly put you to
" death."

At theſe words, which I uttered with a menacing look, the friar, ſeeming afraid of his life, ſaid, " Hold! I will ſatisfy you then,

" ſince

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" ſince there is a neceſſity for it:—I ſee tropes " and figures have no effect on people of your " profeſſion." So ſaying, he pulled from underneath his gown a large purſe of ſhamoy leather, which he dropped upon the ground. Then I told him he might continue his journey; a permiſſion he did not give me the trouble of repeating; but clapped his heels to the ſides of his mule, which belying the opinion I had conceived of her (for I imagined ſhe was not much better than my uncle's) all of a ſudden went off at a pretty round pace. As ſoon as he was at a diſtance I alighted, and taking up the purſe, which ſeemed heavy, mounted again, and got back to the wood in a trice, where the thieves waited with impatience to congratulate me upon my victory. —Scarce would they give me time to diſmount, ſo eager were they to embrace me; " Courage, Gil Blas! (ſaid Rolando) thou " haſt done wonders.—I have had my eyes " on thee during thy expedition: I have ob- " ſerved thy countenance all the time, and I " prophecy that thou wilt in time become an " excellent highwayman." The lieutenant and the reſt approved the prediction, which they aſſured me I ſhould one day certainly fulfil. I thanked them for the high idea they had conceived of me and promiſed to do all that lay in my power to maintain it.

After they had loaded me with ſo much undeſerved praiſe: they were deſirous of examining

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mining the booty I had made. "Come, "(ſaid they) let us ſee what there is in the "clergyman's purſe."—"It ought to be well "furniſhed (continued one among them) for "thoſe good fathers don't travel like pil-"grims." The captain untied the purſe, and, opening it, pulled out two or three handfuls of copper medals, mixed with bits of hallowed wax, and ſome ſcapularies*. At the ſight of ſuch an uncommon prey, all the robbers burſt out into immoderate fits of laughter. "Upon my ſoul (cried the lieutenant) "we are very much obliged to Gil Blas for "having in his *coup d'eſſai*, performed a "theft ſo ſalutary to the company." This piece of wit brought on more. Thoſe miſcreants, and he in particular who had apoſtatized, began to be very merry upon the matter: a thouſand ſallies eſcaped them, that too well denoted their immorality.—I was the only perſon that did not laugh, my mirth being checked by the railers, who enjoyed themſelves at my expenſe. Every one having ſhot his bolt, the captain ſaid to me, "In faith, "Gil Blas, I adviſe thee as a friend to joke "no more with monks, who are, generally "ſpeaking, too arch and cunning for ſuch as "thee."

* Scapularies are pieces of conſecrated ſtuff, worn by prieſts and nuns.

CHAP.

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CHAP. IX.

Of the ſerious affair that followed this adventure.

WE remained in the wood the greateſt part of the day, without perceiving any traveller that could make amends for the prieſt. At laſt we left it, in order to return to our cavern, confining our exploits to that ludicrous event, which ſtill conſtituted the ſubject of our diſcourſe, when we diſcovered at a diſtance a coach drawn by four mules, advancing at a briſk trot, and eſcorted by three men on horſeback, who ſeemed well armed. Upon this Rolando ordered his troop to halt, and held a council; the reſult of which was, that they ſhould attack the coach. We were immediately arranged according to his diſpoſition, and marched up to it in order of battle—In ſpite of the applauſe I had acquired in the wood, I felt myſelf ſeiezd with an univerſal tremor, and immediately a cold ſweat broke out all over my body, which I looked upon as no very favourable omen.—To crown my good luck I was in the front of the line, between the captain and lieutenant, who had ſtationed me there, that I might accuſtom myſelf to ſtand fire all at once. Rolando obſerving how much nature ſuffered within me, looked at me aſkance, ſaying, with a fierce countenance, "Hark'ee, Gil Blas, "remember to do thy duty; for if thou "hang'ſt an aſs, I'll blow thy brains out." I was

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I was too well perſuaded that he would keep his word to neglect this caution; for which reaſon I thought of nothing now but of recommending my ſoul to God.

In the mean time the coach and horſemen approached, who knowing what ſort of people we were, and gueſſing our deſign by our appearance, ſtopped within muſket-ſhot, and prepared to receive us; while a gentleman of a good mein, and richly dreſſed, came out of the coach, and mounting a horſe that was led by one of his attendants, put himſelf at their head, without any other arms than a ſword and a pair of piſtols.—Though they were but four againſt nine (the coachman remaining on the ſeat) they advanced towards us with a boldneſs that redoubled my fear: I did not fail, however, though I trembled in every joint, to make ready to fire; but, to tell the truth I ſhut my eyes, and turned away my head, when I diſcharged my carabine; and, conſidering the manner in which it went off, my conſcience ought to be acquitted on that ſcore.

I will not pretend to deſcribe the action; for although I was preſent I ſaw nothing, and my fear, in confounding my imagination, concealed from me the horror of the ſpectacle that occaſioned it.—All I know of the matter is, that after a great noiſe of firing, I heard my companions ſhout, and cry victory! victory! at that acclamation, the terror, which had taken poſſeſſion of my ſenſes, diſſipated, and I ſaw the four horſemen ſtretched lifeleſs on

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on the field of battle. On our ſide we had but one man killed, and he was no other than the apoſtate, who had met with his deſerts for his apoſtacy and profane jeſts upon the ſcapularies. The lieutenant received a wound in the arm; but it was a very ſlight one, the ſhot having only ruffled his ſkin.

Signor Rolando ran immediately to the door of the coach, in which there was a lady of about four or five and twenty years of age, who appeared very handſome notwithſtanding the melancholy condition in which ſhe was, for ſhe had ſwooned during the engagement, and was not yet recovered. While he was buſied in looking after her, we took care of the booty, beginning with ſecuring the horſes of the killed, which, frightened at the noiſe of the firing had ran away, after having loſt their riders. As for the mules they had not ſtirred, although the coachman (during the action) had quitted his place, in order to make his eſcape.—We alighted, and, unyoking, loaded them with ſome trunks we found faſtened to the coach, before and behind. This being done, the lady, who had not as yet recovered her ſenſes, was (by order of the captain) taken out and placed on horſeback before one of the robbers that was beſt mounted; after which, quitting the high road, the coach and the dead, whom we had ſtripped, we carried off the lady, the mules, and the horſes.

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CHAP. X.

In what manner the robbers behaved to the lady.—Of the great deſign which Gil Blas projected, and the iſſue thereof.

IT was within an hour of day-break when we arrived at our habitation; and the firſt thing we did was to lead our beaſts into the ſtable, where we were obliged to tie them to the rack, and take care of them with our own hands, the old negro having been (three days before) ſeized with a violent fit of the gout and rheumatiſm, that kept him a-bed, deprived of the uſe of all his limbs: the only member at liberty was his tongue, which he employed in teſtifying his impatience, by the moſt horrible execrations. Leaving this miſerable wretch to ſwear and blaſpheme, we went to the kitchen, where our whole attention was engroſſed by the lady, and we ſucceeded ſo well as to bring her out of her fit: but when ſhe had recovered the uſe of her ſenſes, and ſaw herſelf in the hands of ſeveral men whom ſhe did not know, ſhe perceived her misfortune, and was ſeized with horror! The moſt lively ſorrow and direful deſpair appeared in her eyes, which ſhe lifted up, to heaven as if to reproach it with the indignities that threatened her: then giving way of a ſudden to thoſe diſmal apprehenſions, ſhe relapſed into a ſwoon, her eye-lids cloſed, and the robbers imagined that death would deprive

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prive them of their prey.—The captain, thinking it more proper to leave her to herſelf than to torment her with their aſſiſtance, ordered her to be carried to Leonarda's bed, where ſhe was left alone, at the hazard of what might happen.

We repaired to the hall, where one of the thieves, who had been bred a ſurgeon, dreſſed the lieutenant's wound: after which, being deſirous of ſeeing what was in the trunks, we found ſome of them filled with lace and linen, others with chothes, and the laſt we opened contained ſome bags full of piſtoles; at ſight of which the gentlemen concerned were infinitely rejoiced. This enquiry being made, the cook-maid furniſhed the ſide-board, laid the cloth, and ſerved up ſupper.—Our converſation at firſt turned upon the great victory we had obtained; and Rolando addreſſing himſelf to me, "Confeſs, Gil Blas "(ſaid he) confeſs that thou waſt horribly "afraid. I ingenuouſly owned, that what he ſaid was very true; but that when I ſhould have made two or three campaigns, I would fight like an knight-errant: whereupon the whole company took my part, obſerving that my fear was excuſable; that the action had been very hot; and that, conſidering I was a young fellow who had never ſmelled gunpowder, I had acquitted myſelf pretty well.

The diſcourſe afterwards falling upon the mules and horſes we had brought into our retreat, it was agreed, that to-morrow before

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day we ſhould all ſet out together, in order to ſell them at Manſilla, which place, in all probability, the report of our expedition had not yet reached. This reſolution being taken, we finiſhed our meal, and returned into the kitchen to viſit the lady, whom we found ſtill in the ſame ſituation.—Nevertheleſs, though it was with difficulty we could perceive any ſigns of life, in her, ſome of the villians did not ſcruple to regard her with a profane eye, and even to diſcover a brutal deſire, which they would have ſatisfied immediately, had not Rolando prevented it, repreſenting to them, that they ought at leaſt to wait until the lady ſhould get the better of that oppreſſion of ſorrow which deprived her of reflection.—The reſpect they had for their captain reſtrained their incontinence, otherwiſe nothing could have ſaved the lady, whoſe honour death itſelf, perhaps, would not have been able to ſecure.

We left this unfortunate gentlewoman in the ſame condition in which we found her, Rolando contenting himſelf with laying injunctions on Leonarda to take care of her, while every one retired into his own apartment. For my own part, as ſoon as I got to bed, inſtead of reſigning myſelf to ſleep, I did nothing but think of this lady's misfortune: I never doubted that ſhe was a perſon of quality, and looked upon her ſituation as the more deplorable for that reaſon.—I could not without ſhuddering repreſent to myſelf the horrors to which ſhe was deſtined, and felt myſelf

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myſelf as deeply concerned for her as if I had been attached by blood or friendſhip. At laſt, after having bewailed her hard fate, I began to revolve the means of reſcuing her honour from the danger in which it was, and of delivering myſelf at the ſame time from the ſubterranean abode.—I recollected that the old negro was not in a condition to move, and that, ſince his being taken ill, the cook-wench kept the key of the grate.—This reflection warmed my imagination, and made me conceive a ſcheme, which I digeſted ſo well, that I proceeded to put it in practice immediately, in the following manner.

Pretending to be racked with the colick, I began with complaints and groans; then raiſing my voice, uttered dreadful cries, that waked the robbers, and brought them inſtantly to my bed-ſide. When they aſked what made me roar ſo hideouſly, I anſwered that I was tortured with an horrible colick; and, the better to perſuade them of the truth of what I ſaid, grinded my teeth, made frightful grimaces and contorſions, and writhed myſelf in a ſtrange manner: then I became quiet all of a ſudden as if my pains had given me ſome reſpite.—In a moment after, I began again to bounce about the bed, and twiſt about my limbs: in a word, I played my part ſo well, that the thieves, cunning as they were, allowed themſelves to be deceived, and believed in good earneſt, that I was violently griped. In a moment all of them were buſied

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in endeavours to eaſe me; one brought a bottle of uſquebaugh, and made me ſwallow one half of it: another, in ſpite of my teeth, injected a clyſter of oil of ſweet almonds; a third warmed a napkin, and applied it broiling hot to my belly.—I roared for mercy in vain: they imputed my cries to the colick, and continued to make me ſuffer real pains, in attempting to free me from one I did not feel. At laſt being able to reſiſt them no longer, I was fain to tell them that the gripes had left me, and to conjure them to give me quarter. Upon which they left off tormenting me with their remedies, and I took care to trouble them no more with my complaints, for fear of undergoing their good offices a ſecond time.

This ſcene laſted almoſt three hours, after which the robbers, judging that day was not far off, prepared themſelves to ſet out for Manſilla: I would have got up, to make them believe I was very deſirous of accompanying them; but they would not ſuffer me to riſe, Signor Rolando ſaying, "No, no, Gil Blas, "ſtay at home child; thy colick may re-"turn—Thou ſhalt go with us another time; "but thou art in no condition to go abroad "to day." I was afraid of inſiſting upon it too much, leſt he ſhould yield to my requeſt; therefore I only appeared very much mortified, becauſe I could not be of the party. This I acted ſo naturally, that they went out of the cavern without the leaſt ſuſpicion of my

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my deſign.—After their departure, which I had endeavoured to haſten by my prayers, I ſaid to myſelf, "Now Gil Blas! now is the "time for thee to have reſolution: arm thy- "ſelf with courage, to finiſh that which thou "haſt ſo happily begun.—Domingo is not in "a condition to oppoſe thy enterpriſe, and "Leonarda cannot hinder its execution.— "Seize this opportunity of eſcaping, than "which, perhaps, thou wilt never find one "more favourable." Theſe ſuggeſtions filled me with confidence; I got up, took my ſword and piſtols, and went towards the kitchen; but before I entered, hearing Leonarda ſpeak- ing, ſtopped, in order to liſten. She was talk- ing to the unknown lady, who, having reco- vered her ſenſes, and underſtood the whole of her misfortue, wept, in the utmoſt bitter- neſs of deſpair.—"Weep, my child (ſaid "the old beldam to her) diſſolve yourſelf in- "to tears, and don't ſpare for ſighs; for that "will give you eaſe.—You have had a dan- "gerous qualm: but now, there is nothing "to fear, ſince you ſhed abundance of tears. "—Your grief will abate by little and little, "and you will ſoon accuſtom yourſelf to live "with our gentlemen who are men of ho- "nour.—You will be treated like a princeſs, "meet with nothing but complaiſance, and "freſh proofs of affection every day.—There "are a great many women who would be "glad to be in your place."

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I did not give Leonarda time to proceed, but entering clapped a piſtol to her breaſt, and, with a threatening look commanded her to ſurrender the key of the grate. She was confounded at my behaviour, and, though almoſt at the end of her career, ſo much atached to life, that ſhe durſt not refuſe my demand. Having got the key in my poſſeſſion, I addreſſed myſelf to the afflicted lady, ſaying, "Madam, heaven has ſent you a deliverer; "riſe and follow me, and I will conduct you "whitherſoever you ſhall pleaſe to direct." The lady did not remain deaf to my words, which made ſuch an impreſſion upon her, that ſummoning up all the ſtrength ſhe had left, ſhe got up and throwing herſelf at my feet, conjured me to preſerve her honour. I raiſed her and aſſured her, that ſhe might rely upon me; then taking ſome cords, which I perceived in the kitchen, with her aſſiſtance, I tied Leonardo to the feet of a large ſtable, ſwearing that if ſhe opened her mouth, I would kill her on the ſpot. I afterwards lighted a flambeau, and going with the ſtranger into the room where the gold and ſilver was depoſited, filled my pockets with piſtoles and double piſtoles; and to induce the lady to follow my example, aſſured her, that ſhe only took back her own. When we had made a good proviſion of this kind, we went towards the ſtable, which I entered alone with my piſtols cocked, firmly believing that the old negro, in ſpite of his gout and rheumatiſm, would

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not ſuffer me to ſaddle and bridle my horſe in quiet; and fully reſolved to cure him of all his diſtempers, if he ſhould take it in his head to be troubleſome: but, by good luck he was ſo overwhelmed with the pains he had undergone, and thoſe he ſt ll ſuffered, that I brought my horſe out of the ſtable, even without his ſeeming to perceive it; and the lady waiting for me at the door, we threaded with all diſpatch the paſſage that led out of the cavern, arrived at the grate, which we opened, and at laſt came to the trap-door, which we lifted up with great difficulty, or rather the deſire of eſcaping lent us new ſtrength, without which we ſhould not have been able to ſucceed.

Day began to appear juſt as we found ourſelves delivered from the jaws of this abyſs; and as we fervently deſired to be at a greater diſtance from it, I threw myſelf into the ſaddle, the lady mounted behind me, and following the firſt path that preſented itſelf, at a round gallop, got out of the foreſt in a ſhort time, and entered a plain divided by ſeveral roads, one of which we took at random. I was mortally afraid that it would conduct us to Manſilla, where we might meet with Rolando and his confederates; but happ ly my fear was vain. We arrived at the town of Aſtorga, at two o'clock in the afternoon, where people gazed at us with extreme attention, as if it had been an extraordinary thing to ſee a woman on horſeback, ſitting behind a man. We

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alighted at the first inn we came to, where the first thing I did, was to order a partridge and a young rabbit to the fire; and while this was doing, I conducted the lady into a chamber, where we began to converse with one another; for we had rode so fast, that we had no discourse upon the road. She shewed how sensible she was of the service I had done to her, and observed, that after I had performed such a generous action, she could not persuade herself that I was a companion of the thieves, from whom I had rescued her. I told her my story, in order to confirm the good opinion she had conceived of me; and, by that means engaged her to honour me with her confidence, and inform me of her misfortunes, which she recounted, as I shall relate in the following chapter.

CHAP. XI.

The history of Donna Mencia of Mosquera.

I Was born at Valladolid, and my name is Donna Mencia of Mosquera. Don Martin my farther, after having spent almost his whole patrimony in the service of his king, was killed in Portugal, at the head of his own regiment, and left me so moderately provided, that though I was an only child, I was far from being a good match. I did not want admirers, however, in spite of the lowness of my fortune: a good many of the most considerable cavaliers in Spain made their addresses

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dreſſes to me; but he who attracted my attention moſt, was Don Alvaro de Mello: he was indeed more handſome than any of his rivals; but more ſubſtantial qualifications determined me in his favour; he was endued with Prudence, probity, and valour, and withal the moſt gallant man in the world: when he gave entertainments, nothing could be more elegant, and when he appeared at tournaments, every body admired his vigour and addreſs: I preferred him therefore to all others, and married him accordingly.

A few days after our marriage, he happened to meet with Don Andrea de Baeſa, who had been one of his rivals, in a private place, where, quarrelling with each other, they came to blows, and Don Andrea loſt his life in the rencounter. As he was nephew to the corregidor of Valladolid, a violent man, and mortal enemy to the family of Mello, Don Alvaro knew he could not leave the city too ſoon: he returned home in a hurry, and while they ſaddled his horſe, told me what had happened.——"My dear Mencia (ſaid he) we "muſt part! you know the corrigidor: don't "let us then flatter ourſelves, for he will pro- "ſecute me with the utmoſt rancour; and "as you are not ignorant of his credit, you "know I cannot be ſafe in this kingdom." He was ſo much penetrated with his own ſorrow, and with that which he ſaw take poſſeſſion of my breaſt, that he could ſay no more; and when I had prevailed upon him

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to furniſh himſelf with ſome money and jewels, he claſped me in his arms, and, during a whole quarter of an hour, we did nothing but mingle our ſighs and tears. At laſt, being told the horſe was ready, he tore himſelf from me; he departed and left me in a condition not to be deſcribed. Happy! had the exceſs of my affliction, at that time, put an end to my life! what troubles and ſorrows would my death have prevented! Some hours after Don Alvaro was gone, the corregidor being informed of his flight, ordered him to be purſued, and ſpared nothing to have him in his power: but my huſband always baffled his purſuit, and kept himſelf ſecure, in ſuch a manner that the judge found himſelf obliged to limit his revenge to the ſole ſatisfaction of ruining the fortune of a man, whoſe blood he wanted to ſhed; his efforts were not unſucceſsful, all the effects of Don Alvaro being confiſcated.

Left in the moſt afflicting ſituation, and having ſcarce wherewithal to ſubſiſt, I began to live a very ſolitary life, all my attendants being reduced to one maid: I ſpent the day in bemoaning, not an indigence, which I could have borne with patience; but the abſence of my dear huſband, whoſe condition I was utterly ignorant of, although he had promiſed, in his laſt melancholy adieu, that he would take care to inform me of his lot, into whatever part of the world his cruel fate ſhould conduct him. Nevertheleſs, ſeven long years elapſed,

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elapſed, without my hearing the leaſt account of him; and this uncertainty of his deſtiny plunged me into an abyſs of ſorrow! At laſt I was told, that, in fighting for the king of Portugal in Fez, he had loſt his life in battle: a man lately returned from Afric confirmed this report, aſſuring me, that he was perfectly well acquainted with Don Alvaro de Mello, had ſerved with him in the Portugueſe army, and even ſeen him fall in the action: to this he added many other circumſtances, which perſuaded me that my huſband was no more.

At that time, Don Ambroſio Meſia Carrillo, Marquis of Guardia, came to Valladolid: he was one of thoſe old lords, who, by the politeneſs and gallantry of their manners, make people forget their age, and continue ſtill agreeable to the ladies; one day hearing, by accident the ſtory of Don Alvaro; and being deſirous of ſeeing me, on account of the picture which had been drawn of me: for the ſatisfaction of his curioſity, he engaged one of my relations, who carried me to her houſe. Seeing me there, I had the fortune to pleaſe him, in ſpite of the remarkable impreſſion which grief had made on my countenance: but why do I ſay, in ſpite of it? perhaps he was touched alone by my ſad and languiſhing air, which prepoſſeſſed him in favour of my fidelity: his love in all probability was the effect of my melancholy; for he told me more than once, that he looked upon me as a miracle of conſtancy; and that, for

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for this reaſon, he even envied the fate of my huſband, how deplorable ſoever it was in other reſpects: in a word, he was ſtruck at ſight of me, and had no occaſion to ſee me a ſecond time, in order to take the reſolution of making me his wife.

He choſe the interceſſion of my kinſwoman, towards the obtaining of my conſent: ſhe came to my lodgings accordingly, and repreſented to me, that my huſband having ended his days in the kingdom of Fez, as we had been informed, it was not reaſonable that I ſhould bury my charms any longer; that I had ſufficiently bewailed the fate of a man, with whom I had been united but a few moments; and that I ought to profit by the occaſion that now preſented itſelf; by which means I ought to be the happieſt woman in the world. Then ſhe extolled the great family of the old Marquis, his vaſt eſtate, and unblemiſhed character: but her eloquence in diſplaying the advantages he poſſeſſed was in vain; it was not in her power to perſuade me; not that I doubted the death of Don Alvaro, or was reſtrained by the fear of ſeeing him again, when I ſhould leaſt expect him; the little inclination, or rather the reluctance, I felt for a ſecond marriage, after having ſuffered ſo many misfortunes by my firſt, was the only obſtacle my relation had to remove. She did not deſpair for all that; on the contrary, it redoubled her zeal for Don Ambroſio; ſhe engaged my whole family in the intereſts

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intereſts of that lord; my relations preſſed me to accept of ſuch an advantageous match, I was every moment beſieged, importuned, and tormented; and my miſery which daily increaſed, contributed not a little to overcome my reſiſtance.

Being unable, therefore, to hold out any longer, I yielded to their preſſing inſtances, and married the Marquis of Guardia, who, the day after our nuptials carried me to a very fine caſtle which he had, ſituated near Burgos, between Grajal and Rodillas. He conceived the moſt violent paſſion for me, and I obſerved in the whole of his behaviour, the utmoſt deſire of pleaſing me. His only ſtudy was to anticipate my wiſhes: no huſband had ever ſuch a tender regard for his wife; and no lover ever ſhowed more complaiſance to his miſtreſs. I ſhould have been paſſionately fond of Don Ambroſia, notwithſtanding the diſproportion of our years, had I been capable of loving any one after Don Alvaro, but a conſtant heart can never change. The endeavours of my ſecond huſband to pleaſe me were rendered ineffectual by the remembrance of my firſt; ſo that I could only requite his tenderneſs with pure ſentiments of gratitude.

I was in this diſpoſition, when, one day, taking the air at the window of my appartment, I perceived, in the garden, a kind of peaſant, who earneſtly looked at me: thinking he was the gardener's ſervant, I took no notice of him; but next day being again at the window,

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dow, I ſaw him in the ſame place, and he ſeemed to view me with uncommon attention; ſtruck with this circumſtance, I looked at him, in my turn, and after having ſome time conſidered him, thought I recollected the features of the unfortunate Don Alvaro! This apparition raiſed an inconceivable tumult within me! I ſhrieked aloud; but luckily, there was nobody preſent, except Inez, who, of all my ſervants, enjoyed the greateſt ſhare of my confidence. When I imparted to her the ſuſpicion that alarmed me, ſhe laughed at my apprehenſion, believing that my eyes were impoſed upon by ſome ſlight reſemblance.—"Recollect yourſelf, madam (ſaid ſhe) and "don't imagine you have ſeen your former "huſband: what likelihood is there, that he "ſhould be here in the dreſs of a peaſant? "or, indeed, what probability is there of his "being alive! I will go down into the gar-"den (added ſhe) and talk to this country-"man, and when I have learned who he is, "come back and let you know." Inez accordingly went into the garden, and ſoon after returned to my appartment in great emotion, ſaying "Madam, your ſuſpicion is but too "juſt! it is Don Alvaro himſelf whom you "have ſeen! He has diſcovered himſelf, and "demands a ſecret interview."

As I had, at that very time, an opportunity of receiving Don Alvaro, the Marquis being at Burgos, I ordered my maid to bring him into my cloſet by a private ſtair-caſe. You may

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may well think that I was in a terrible agitation and altogether unable to ſupport the preſence of a man who had a right to load me with reproaches. As ſoon as he appeared, I fainted away. Inez and he flew to my aſſiſtance, and when they had brought me out of my ſwoon, Don Alvaro ſaid, "Madam, for "heaven's ſake compoſe yourſelf; let not my "preſence be a puniſhment to you; I have "no intention to give you the leaſt pain; I "come not as a furious huſband, to call you "to an account of your plighted troth, and "upbraid you with the ſecond engagement "you have contracted: I know very well, "that it was the work of your relations; I "am acquainted with all the perſecutions you "have ſuffered on that ſcore: beſides, the "report of my death was ſpread all over "Valladolid; and you had the more reaſon "to believe it true, as no letter from me "aſſured you of the contrary: in ſhort, I "know in what manner you have lived ſince "our cruel ſeparation, and that neceſſity, ra-"ther than love, has thrown you into the "arms of—."—"Ah ſir! (cried I, interrupt-"ing him) why will you excuſe your un-"happy wife! ſhe is criminal ſince you live! "Why am I not ſtill in that miſerable ſituation in which I lived, before I gave my "hand to Don Ambroſio! Fatal nuptials! I "ſhould then, at leaſt, have had the conſo-"lation in my miſery, to ſee you again with-"out a bluſh."

"My

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" My dear Mencia! (replied Don Alvaro, " with a look that teſtified how much he was " affected by my tears) I do not complain; " and far from reproaching you with the ſplen- " did condition in which I find you, by all " my hopes I thank heaven for it; ſince the " melancholy day of my departure from Val- " ladolid fate has been always adverſe, and " my life but a chain of misfortunes; and, " to crown my miſery, it never was in my " power to let you hear from me! Too con- " fident of your love, I inceſſantly repreſent- " ed to myſelf the condition to which my " fatal tenderneſs had reduced you. My ima- " gination painted Donna Mencia in her tears! " you was the greateſt of all my misfortunes, " and ſometimes I muſt confeſs, I have look- " ed upon myſelf as a criminal, in having had " the good fortune to pleaſe you: I have " wiſhed that your affections had inclined to- " wards ſome one of my rivals, ſince the pre- " ference you gave to me had coſt you ſo " dear. Nevertheleſs, after ſeven years of " ſuffering, more in love than ever, I was re- " ſolved to ſee you. I could not reſiſt this " deſire, which at the end of a long ſlavery, " having an opportunity to ſatisfy, I went " in this diſguiſe, to Valladolid, at the ha- " zard of my life; there being informed of " every thing, I came hither, and found " means to introduce myſelf into the family " of the gardener, who has hired me to work " under him. You ſee in what manner I have

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" conducted myſelf to obtain this private in-
" terview; but do not imagine that my de-
" ſign is to diſturb the felicity you enjoy, by
" remaining in this place. No! I love you
" more than myſelf; I have the utmoſt re-
" gard for your repoſe; and now that I have
" had the melancholy ſatisfaction of conver-
" ſing with you, will go and finiſh, at a di-
" ſtance, that miſerable life, which I ſacrifice
" to your quiet."

" No, Don Alvaro! no! (cried I, at theſe
" words) I will not ſuffer you to leave me a
" ſecond time! I will go along with you,
" and death alone ſhall divide us!"—" Take
" my advice (ſaid he) and live with Don
" Ambroſio; do not aſſociate yourſelf with
" my misfortunes, but leave me alone to ſup-
" port the weight of them." He ſaid other things, to the ſame purpoſe; but the more he ſeemed willing to ſacrifice himſelf to my happineſs, I felt myſelf the leſs diſpoſed to conſent to it; and when he ſaw me firmly reſolved to follow him, he changed his tone all of a ſudden, and aſſuming a more ſerene air, ſaid, " Madam, ſince you have ſtill ſo much
" love for Don Alvaro, as to prefer his mi-
" ſery to the proſperity you now enjoy, let
" us go and live at Betancos, at the father
" end of the kingdom of Gallicia, where I
" have a ſecret retreat. Although my mis-
" fortunes have ruined my eſtate, they have
" not yet deprived me of friends: I have
" ſtill ſome faithful ones remaining, who have
" put

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" put me in a condition to carry you off: by " their aſſitance I have provided a coach at " Zamora, bought mules and horſes, and am " accompanied by three reſolute Gallicians, " armed with carabines and piſtols, who now " wait for my orders at the villiage of Ro- " dillas. Let us therefore (added he) take " the advantage of Don Ambroſio's abſence: " I will order the coach to come to the caſtle- " gate and we will ſet out inſtantly." I conſented: Don Alvaro flew to Rodillas, and returned in a ſhort time, with his three attendants, to carry me off from the midſt of my women, who not knowing what to think of this event, ran all away in the utmoſt conſternation: Inez alone was privy to it, but refuſed to attach her fortune to mine, becauſe ſhe was in love with the valet de chambre of Don Ambroſio.

I got into the coach with Don Alvaro, carrying nothing with me but my own clothes, and ſome jewels I had before my ſecond marriage; for I would take nothing that the Marquis had given me, on that occaſion. We took the road to Gallicia, without knowing if we ſhould be ſo happy as to reach it, having reaſon to fear that Don Ambroſio, at his return, would purſue us with a great number of people and overtake us. Nevertheleſs, we continued our journey two days, without ſeeing one horſeman behind us; and in hopes that the third would paſs in the ſame manner, were converſing with each other in great tranquillity;

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quillity; Don Alvaro had juſt recounted the melancholy adventure which had given riſe to the report of his death; and how, after having been a ſlave five years, he had recovered his liberty; when yeſterday, on the road to Leon, we met thoſe thieves, with whom you was in company, he is the perſon whom they murdered, with all his attendants, and for whom theſe my tears are ſhed.

CHAP. XII.

Of the diſagreeable manner in which Gil Blas and the lady were interrupted.

DONNA Mencia having ended her relation, ſhed a torrent of tears, while I, letting her give free vent to her ſighs, wept alſo; ſo natural is it to intereſt one's ſelf for the unfortunate, eſpecially for a fine lady in diſtreſs. I was going to aſk what ſhe intended to do in the preſent conjuncture, and perhaps ſhe was about to conſult me on the ſame ſubject; when our converſation was interrupted by a great noiſe in the inn, which, in ſpite of us, attracted our attention. This noiſe was occaſioned by the arrival of the corregidor, followed by two alguazils* and a guard, who, without any ceremony, entered the room where we were. A gentleman who accompanied them approached me firſt, and examining my dreſs

*Alguzils are attendants of juſtice, whoſe office reſembles that of our bailiffs.

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had no occaſion to heſitate long, but cried, "By St. Jago! this is my individual doublet, "as eaſy to be known again as my horſe: "you may apprehend this gallant on my te- "ſtimony, he is one of the thieves who have "an unknown retreat ſome where in this "country."

At this diſcourſe, by which I underſtood he was the gentleman who had been robbed, and whoſe ſpoils I was unluckily in poſſeſſion of, I was ſurprized, confounded, and diſmayed! the corregidor, whoſe office obliged him to put a bad conſtruction on my diſorder, rather than interpret it favourably, concluded that I was not accuſed without reaſon, and preſuming that the lady might be an accomplice, ordered us to be impriſoned ſeparately. This judge, far from being one of thoſe who aſſume a ſtern countenance, was all ſoftneſs and ſmiles; but God knows if he was a bit the better for that; for I was no ſooner committed, than he came into the jail with his two terriers, I mean the alguazils; who (not forgetting their laudible cuſtom) began to rummage me in a moment. What a glorious windfall was this for thoſe honeſt gentlemen! I do not believe that ever they got ſuch a booty before: at every handful of piſtoles they pulled out, I ſaw their eyes ſparkle with joy; the corregidor, in particular, was tranſported! "Child (ſaid he, with a voice "full of meekneſs) we muſt do our duty, "but be not afraid: if thou art innocent, "thou

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" thou ſhalt ſuſtain no harm." In the mean time, with all their gentleneſs, they emptied my pockets, and even robbed me of that which the thieves had reſpected, I mean my uncle's forty ducats: their greedy and indefatigable hands ſearched me from head to foot; they turned me about on all ſides, and even ſtripped me to ſee if I had any money between my ſhirt and my ſkin. When they had dextrouſly acquitted themſelves in this manner, I was interrogated by the corregidor, to whom I ingenuouſly recounted every thing that had happened to me. He ordered my depoſition to be taken in writing, and then went away with his attendants and my coin, leaving me entirely naked among ſtraw.

" O life! (cried I, when I found myſelf alone in this condition) how full of capricious adcidents and diſappointments art thou! Since I left Oviedo, I have met with nothing but misfortunes! Scarce had I got out of one danger, when I fell into another! and when I came into this town, I was far from thinking that I ſhould ſo ſoon become acquainted with the corregidor." While I made theſe vain reflections, I put on again the curſed doublet and the reſt of the dreſs which my evil genius had lent me; then exhorting myſelf to take courage, " Come, Gil Blas (ſaid I to myſelf) ſhow thy fortitude: it ſhall ill become thee to diſpair in an ordinary priſon, after having put thy patience to ſuch a ſevere trial in the ſubterraneam abyſs!" But, alas! added

I,

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I (in a ſorrowful tone) I abuſe myſelf; how ſhall I eſcape from hence, when I am utterly deprived of the means! In effect, I had too good reaſon to ſay ſo; for a priſoner without money is like a bird whoſe wings are clipped.

Inſtead of the patridge and rabbit I had beſpoke, they brought to me a little brown bread and a pitcher of water, and left me to fret at leiſure in a dungeon, where I remained fifteen whole days, without ſeeing a human creature, except the turnkey, who came every morning to renew my proviſion. As often as I ſaw him I endeavoured to ſpeak and enter into converſation with him; in order to divert me a little: but this venerable perſon made no anſwer to what I ſaid; I could not extract one word from him, nay, for the moſt part, he came in and went out, without ſo much as deigning me a look. On the ſixteenth day, the corregidor coming in, ſaid, "Thou mayeſt "now give a looſe to joy. I bring thee "agreeable tidings. I have ordered the lady "who was along with thee, to be conducted "to Burgos. I examined her before her de-"parture, and her anſwers have exculpated "thee. Thou ſhalt be enlarged this very day, "provided that the muleteer, with whom "(as thou ſayeſt) thou cameſt from Penna-"flor to Cacabelos, confirms thy depoſition. "He is now at Aſtorga, and I have ſent for "him; and if he agrees with thee in the "adventure of the rack, I will inſtantly ſet "thee free."

Theſe

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These words gave me infinite joy! I looked upon myself as already acquitted; I thanked the judge for his just and expeditious decision, and had not quite finished my compliment, when the carrier, conducted by two soldiers, arrived: I remembered his face immediately; but he, having without doubt sold my portmanteau, and all that was in it, was afraid of being obliged to restore the money he had received for it, if he should own that he knew me; and therefore affirmed, with astonishing assurance, that far from knowing me, he had never seen me before! "Ah "traitor (cried I) rather confess that thou "hast sold my goods; and bear witness to "the truth: look at me again. I am one of "the young people whom you threatened "with the torture at the borough of Caca-"belos, and frightened very much." The carrier answered coldly, that I talked of an affair of which he was utterly ignorant; and as he maintained to the last, that I was unknown to him, my enlargement was deferred till another time: so that I was obliged to arm myself with patience a-new, and resolve to regale myself still with my bread and water, and the sight of a silent turnkey.—The thoughts of being unable to free myself from the claws of justice, although I was not guilty of the least crime, threw me into dispair! I wished myself again in the cavern, "where "in the main (said I to myself) I was less "disagreeably situated than in this dungeon:

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" there I eat and drank in plenty, converſed " with the robbers, and lived in the ſweet " hope of making my eſcape; inſtead of " which, notwithſtanding my innocence, I " ſhall perhaps think myſelf happily quit, to " get out of this place, in order to be ſent to " the galleys."

CHAP. XIII.

By what accident Gil Blas was ſet at liberty at laſt; and whither he directed his courſe.

WHILE I paſſed my days in entertaining myſelf with theſe reflections, my adventures ſuch as they appeared in my depoſition, ſpread all over the town; upon which many people being curious to ſee me, came and preſented themſelves, one after another, at a ſmall chink through which the light was conveyed into my priſon, and after having obſerved me for ſome time, went away. I was ſurprized at this novelty; for ſince the day of my impriſonment, I had not before ſeen a living ſoul at that window, which ſerved to enlighten a court where horror reigned in ſilence. Gueſſing from this that I made ſome noiſe in town, I did not know whether to interpret it as a good or bad omen.

One of the firſt that offered themſelves to my view was the little ballad-ſinger of Mondonedo, who, having been equally afraid of the torture, had fled as well as I.—I knew him again immediately, and as he did not pretend

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pretend to have forgot me, we saluted one another, and falling into a long conversation, I was obliged to repeat my adventures a-new: for his part he informed me of what had happened at the inn at Cacabelos, between the carrier and the new-married wife, after we had been driven away by a panic: in a word, he acquainted me with the whole of what I have already rehearsed on that subject. Afterwards taking leave of me for the present, he promised without loss of time, to labour for my deliverance; and every body who came (as he did) through curiosity, seemed affected with my misfortune, and even assured me, that they would join the little ballad-singer, and do all that lay in their power to procure my enlargement.

They kept their promise effectually, and spoke in my behalf to the Corregidor, who no longer doubting my innocence, especially when the ballad-singer had told him what he knew of the matter, at the end of three weeks came into the prison, and said, "Gil Blas I don't "choose to protract things: go, thou art "free, and may'st quit the prison when thou "wilt. But tell me (pursued he) if thou "should'st be brought to the wood in which "the subterranean retreat is, couldst thou not find it out?"—"No, Sir (I replied;) for "as I went in at night, and came out before "day, it would be impossible for me to fix "upon the spot." Upon this the judge withdrew, telling me, that he was going to order

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the turnkey to ſet the priſon doors open for me.—In effect the goaler came into my dungeon a moment after, with one of his men carrying a bundle of clothes; and ſtripping me (with a grave and ſilent air) of my doublet and breeches, which were made of fine cloth, and almoſt new, they put me on a ſhabby footman's ſtrock, and puſhed me out by the ſhoulders.

The joy that priſoners commonly feel in recovering their liberty was moderated by my confuſion in ſeeing myſelf ſo poorly equipped; and I was tempted to leave the town inſtantly, that I might withdraw myſelf from the eyes of the people, whoſe looks I could ſcarce endure: but my gratitude got the better of my ſhame: I went to thank the ballad-ſinger, to whom I was ſo much obliged; and he could not help laughing when he ſaw me.—"What a ſtrange figure you are! (ſaid he) "Juſtice I ſee has been done you in all her "forms."—"I do not complain of juſtice "(I replied) ſhe is moſt equitable: I wiſh "only that all her officers were honeſt men. "They ought at leaſt to have ſpared my "clothes, which I think I paid for pretty "handſomely."—"I think ſo too (ſaid he) "but they will tell you, theſe are formalities "which muſt be obſerved. What do you "think (for example) that your horſe has "been reſtored to the right owner? Not at "all; I aſſure you he is now actually in the "ſtable of the town-clerk, where he has been "de-

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" deposited as a proof of the robbery; and " I don't believe the poor gentleman will ever " retrieve so much as the crupper.—But let " us shift our discourse (continued he) what " is your design; What scheme do you intend " to prosecute at present?"—" I want to " go to Burgos (said I) in order to find out " the lady I delivered, who will give me a " few pistoles, with which I will purchase " a new cassock, and repair to Salamanca, " where I will endeavour to make my Latin " turn to some advantage. All I am con- " cerned at is, that I am at some distance " from Burgos, and shall want subsistence on " the road."—" I understand you (he repli- " ed) here is my purse:—tis, indeed, a " little low; but a ballad-singer, you know, " is not a bishop." At the same time he " slipped it into my hand so chearfully, that I could not for my soul refuse the offer, such as it was. I thanked him as much as if he had given me all the gold in Peru, and made a thousand professions of service, which I never had an opportunity to perform. Then bidding him farewell, I left the town, without having visited those other persons who had contributed to my enlargement; contenting myself with bestowing upon them in my own thoughts a thousand benedictions.

The little ballad-singer was in the right to speak modestly of his purse, in which I found very little money: but happily for me, I had been used two months to a very frugal

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diet; and I had ſtill ſome rials left, when I arrived at the borough of Ponte de Mula, which is but a little way from Burgos. Here I halted to enquire about Donna Mencia, and going into an inn, the miſtreſs of which was a little, lean, fierce, inſolent creature, I perceived at once, by the diſdainful look ſhe darted me, that my frock was not at all to her liking; a diſguſt which I forgave with all my heart.—I ſat down at table, where I eat ſome bread and cheeſe, and ſwallowed a few draughts of execrable wine, which they brought for me; and during this repaſt, which was very well ſuited to my dreſs, I wanted to enter into converſation with my landlady.—I begged her to tell me if ſhe knew the Marquis of Guardia; if his caſtle was far from the borough; and, in particular, if ſhe had heard what was become of the marchioneſs his lady? "You aſk a great many "queſtions," (replied ſhe, with a ſcornful look.) She told me however (though with a very bad grace) that the caſtle of Don Ambroſio was but a ſhort league from Ponte de Mula.

When I had done eating and drinking (it being by this time pretty late) I expreſſed a deſire of going to reſt, and bad them ſhew me into a bed-chamber. "A bed chamber for "you! (ſaid the landlady, darting at me a "look full of haughtineſs and contempt) I "have no bed-chambers for people who ſup "on a mórſel of cheeſe.—All my beds are "beſpoke:—I expect gentlemen of impor-"tance

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"tance to lodge here to night; ſo that all I "can do for you is to quarter you in the "barn; and it won't, I ſuppoſe, be the firſt "time you have ſlept upon ſtraw." She did not know how true ſhe ſpoke; but I made no reply, and very wiſely condeſcended to ſneak into the ſtraw, where in a very ſhort time I ſlept like one who had ſuffered much fatigue.

CHAP. XIV.

Of his reception at Burgos by Donna Mencia.

I Did not lie a-bed like a ſluggard next morning, but went to reckon with my landlady, who ſeemed leſs proud and ſnappiſh than ſhe had been the night before; a change that I aſcribed to the preſence of three honeſt ſoldiers belonging to the holy brotherhood, who converſed with her in a very familiar manner. —They had lodged all night at the inn, and it was, doubtleſs, for theſe gentlemen of importance, that all the beds had been beſpoke.

Enquiring in the borough the way to the caſtle whither I wanted to go, I addreſſed myſelf by accident to a man of the character of my landlord at Pennaflor: not contented with anſwering the queſtion I aſked, he let me know that Don Ambroſio was dead three weeks ago, and that the marchioneſs his lady had retired into a convent at Burgos, which he named.—I repaired immediately to that city, inſtead of following the road to the caſtle, as I formerly intended, and flying directly to the convent

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where ſhe was, begged the favour of the portreſs to tell her that a young man, juſt releaſed from the goal of Aſtorga, deſired to ſpeak with her. The nun went immediately to do what I deſired, and returning, introduced me into a parlour, where I had not been long when I ſaw the widow of Don Ambroſio appear at the grate in deep mourning.

"You are welcome (ſaid the lady to me); "four days ago I wrote to a perſon at Aſtorga, deſiring him to go to you from me, "and tell you that I ſhould be glad to ſee "you, as ſoon as you ſhould be releaſed; and "I did not doubt of your being enlarged in "a very little time, what I ſaid to the corregidor in your behalf having been ſufficient "for that purpoſe.—In anſwer to this he "wrote, that you had recovered your liberty, "but nobody knew whither you was gone; "ſo that I was afraid I ſhould never ſee you "again, and conſequently be deprived of the "pleaſure of manifeſting my gratitude.— "Don't be aſhamed (added ſhe, obſerving "my confuſion on accouut of appearing "before her in ſuch a miſerable dreſs) let not "your preſent condition give you the leaſt "uneaſineſs. After the important ſervice you "have done me, I ſhould be the moſt ungrateful of all women, if I neglected to do "ſomething for you: I intend to extricate "you out of the wretched ſituation in which "you are: it is my duty and I am able to "perform it—the conſiderable wealth I am

"now

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" now miſtreſs of, impowering me to acquit
" myſelf towards you, without incommoding
" myſelf.

" You know (continued ſhe) my adven-
" tures to the day on which we were both
" impriſoned; and I will tell you what has
" happened to me ſince.—When the corregi-
" dor of Aſtorga had ordered me to be con-
" ducted to Burgos, after having heard from
" my mouth a faithful relation of my ſtory,
" I repaired to Don Ambroſio's Caſtle, where
" my return occaſioned extreme ſurpriſe, tho'
" I was told it was too late; for the marquis,
" thunder-ſtruck at the news of my flight,
" had fallen ill, and the phyſicians deſpaired
" of his life. This was freſh cauſe for me
" to complain of the rigour of my fate: ne-
" vertheleſs, having advertiſed him of my ar-
" rival, I entered his chamber, and running
" to his bed-ſide, threw myſelf on my knees,
" my face bathed in tears, and my heart op-
" preſſed with the moſt afflicting grief!—What
" brings you hither (ſaid he, when he per-
" ceived me) Are you come to contemplate
" your own work? Was it not ſufficient for
" you to deprive me of life, but you muſt
" alſo have the ſatisfaction of being an eye-
" witneſs of my death?"—" No, my lord,
" (I replied) Inez muſt have told you that
" I fled with my huſband; and had it not
" been for the diſmal accident which has
" robbed me of him, you never ſhould have
" ſeen me again! At the ſame time I let him

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" know that Don Alvaro had been murder-
" ed by robbers, who afterwards carried me
" into their ſubterranean retreat; and, in
" ſhort, informed him of all that had hap-
" pened:—When I had done ſpeaking, Don
" Ambroſio ſtretched out his hand to me,
" ſaying, with the utmoſt tenderneſs—I am ſa-
" tisfied—I ceaſe to complain:—Why ſhould
" I reproach you! having found again a huſ-
" band whom you dearly loved, you aban-
" doned me to follow his fortune: ought I
" to blame you for ſuch a conduct? No, ma-
" dam, I ſhould have been in the wrong to
" murmur at it, therefore would not ſuffer
" you to be purſued: I revered the ſacred
" rights of your raviſher, and even your in-
" clination towards him.—In fine, I do you
" juſtice; and, by your return, you have re-
" treived all my tenderneſs! Yes, my dear
" Mencia, your preſence overwhelms me with
" joy! but, alas! it will not laſt long. I feel
" my laſt hour approaching! Scarce are you
" reſtored to my arms, when I muſt bid you
" an eternal adieu!" At theſe affecting words, my tears redoubled! I felt and expreſſed an immoderate affliction! I queſtion if the death of Don Alvaro, whom I adored, had coſt me more ſighs! Don Ambroſio's preſage of his own death was but too true: he expired next day; and I remained miſtreſs of a conſiderable eſtate which he had ſettled upon me, at our marriage. I intend to make no bad uſe of it. The world ſhall not ſee me (though I am

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am ſtill young) throw myſelf into the arms of a third huſband; for, beſides that I think ſuch a conduct would be inconſiſtent with the virtue and delicacy of my ſex, I own I have no longer any reliſh for the world; but deſign to end my days in this convent, and become a benefactreſs to it.

Such was the diſcourſe of Donna Mencia, who, taking out a purſe from under her robe, put it in my hand, ſaying, "Here are an hundred ducats, which I give you only to buy "clothes: come and ſee me again, after you "have equipped yourſelf; for I do not intend to confine my gratitude within ſuch "narrow bounds." I gave the lady a thouſand thanks; and ſwore I would not part from Burgos without taking leave of her: after this oath, which I had no intention to break, I went in queſt of an inn, and going into the firſt I perceived, demanded a room, telling the landlord, (to prevent the bad opinion he might conceive of me, from the ſhabby frock) that notwithſtanding my appearance, I was in a condition to pay handſomely for my lodging. At theſe words, the inn-keeper, whoſe name was Majuelo, naturally a great wag, ſurveying me from top to bottom, anſwered dryly, with a ſarcaſtic ſneer, there was no occaſion for ſuch an aſſurance, to perſuade him that I ſhould ſpend like a prince in his houſe: for he diſcovered ſomething noble in me, by my dreſs; and, in ſhort, did not doubt that I was a gentleman of very independent

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fortune. I could eaſily perceive that the raſcal rallied me, and in order to put an end to his witticiſms, ſhewed my purſe. I even counted my ducats on a table before him, and obſerving that my coin altered his opinion very much in my favour, deſired he would recommend me to a taylor. "You had bet-"ter (ſaid he) ſend for a broker, who will "bring along with him all kinds of apparel "ready made, and fit you in a trice." I approved of his advice, and reſolved to follow it: but the day being near a cloſe, deferred my purchaſe till next morning, and thought of nothing but making a good ſupper, to indemnify me for the ſorry meals I had made ſince my deliverance from the cavern.

CHAP. XV.

Of the manner in which Gil Blas dreſſed himſelf —Of the new preſent he recieved from the lady, and the equipage in which he departed from Burgos.

THEY brought for my ſupper a huge fricaſſee of ſheep-trotters, which I picked to the bones; and having drank in proportion betook myſelf to reſt. As I had the convenience of a good bed, I was in hopes of enjoying a ſound ſleep: but for all that could not cloſe my eyes; my thoughts being engroſſed in determining upon the dreſs I was to chooſe. "What muſt I do (ſaid I to "myſelf (proſecute my firſt deſign, buy a "caſſock

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" caſſock, and go to Salamanca in queſt of " a tutor's place: But why ſhould I take the " habit of a licentiate? Am I ambitious of " conſecrating myſelf to the church? or have " the leaſt bias that way? No: I feel my- " ſelf (on the contrary) quite otherwiſe in- " clined: I will turn gentleman, and endea- " vour to make my fortune in the world."

Having reſolved upon this, I longed for day with the utmoſt impatience: and no ſooner perceived the glimpſe of light, than I got up and made ſo much noiſe in the inn, that I wakened all thoſe who were aſleep. I called the waiters who were ſtill a-bed, and who loaded me with curſes by way of anſwer. They were obliged to riſe, however, and I gave them no quarter, until one of them had gone for a broker, who ſoon appeared followed by two apprentices, carrying each a great green bag on his ſhoulders. He ſaluted me with great civility, ſaying, " Signor Ca- " valier, you are very happy in having ap- " plied to me, rather than to any other body. " I don't chooſe to diſparage my brethren. " God forbid that I ſhould prejudice their " reputation in the leaſt! but between you " and me, there is no conſcience among them. " They are all as unbounded as Jews. I " am the only honeſt broker in town. I con- " fine myſelf to a moderate profit: being " ſatisfied with a pound in the ſhilling—I " mean, a ſhilling in the pound. Thank " heaven!

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" heaven! I deal upon the ſquare with all " mankind."

The broker, after this preamble, which I took for goſpel, ordered his men too untie the bundles, and ſhewed me ſuits of all colours. Some which were of plain cloth I rejected with diſdain, as being too mean; but they made me try one which ſeemed to have been made exactly for my ſhape, and which ſtruck my fancy although ſomewhat worn. It conſiſted of a doublet with ſlaſhed ſleves, a pair of breehes, and a cloak, the whole of blue velvet embroidered with gold. Fixing on this, I cheapened it, and the broker, perceiving I was bent upon it, obſerved that I had an excellent taſte. " Odds bodkins! (cried he) " one may ſee you know what you are about. " I can tell you, that ſuit was made for one " of the greateſt lords in the kingdom, who " never had it three times on his back. Exa- " mine the velvet, nothing can be finer; and " as for the embroidery, you muſt confeſs " the work is exquiſite." What will you ſell it for? (ſaid I) he anſwered, " Sixty ducats: " I am a rogue if I have not refuſed the " money." The alternative was plain. I offerred five and forty, which might be about double the value. Mr. What d'ye call 'um, " (replied the broker, with an air of indif- " ference) I never exact too much. I am al- " ways at a word. Here (continued he, " ſhowing me ſome of thoſe I had refuſed) " buy this. I'll ſell it a pennyworth." This

was

was only to excite my desire of purchasing that which I had cheapened; and accordingly, imagining that he would not abate one farthing of his price, I counted into his hand the sixty ducats. When he saw me part with them so easily, I believe in spite of his boasted honesty, he wished that he had asked a great deal more: pretty well satisfied, however, with having gained nineteen shillings in the pound, he went away with his apprentices, whom I had not forgotten.

Having now a very handsome cloak, doublet, and breches, I spent the rest of the morning in providing other necessaries. I bought a hat, silk stockings, shoes, linen, and a sword: after which, having dressed, what infinite pleasure had I in beholding myself so well equipped! My eyes (to use the expression) could not sufficiently glut themselves with my attire! Never peacock contemplated his own feathers with more satisfaction. That very day I made my second visit to Donna Mencia, who still received me very kindly, and thanked me again for the service I had done her. On that score, many compliments passed on both sides: after which, wishing me all happiness, she bade me farewell, and retired without giving me any thing but a ring worth thirty pistoles, which she desired me to keep in remembrance of her.

I looked very blank with my ring, having laid my account with receiving a much more considerable present, and trudged back to my lodgings.

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lodgings in a brown ſtudy, little ſatisfied with the lady's generoſity. But juſt as I entered the inn, a man, who had followed me all the way, came in likewiſe, and laying aſide the cloak in which he was muffled up, diſcovered a great bag under his arm. At the apparition of this bag, which had all the air of being full of money, I, as well as ſome other people who were preſent, ſtared with their eyes wide open; and I thought I heard the voice of an angel, when the man laying the bag upon the table, pronounced, "Signor Gil Blas, here is ſome-"thing that my lady marchioneſs has ſent you." I made many profound bows to the bearer, whom I overwhelmed with civility: and he was no ſooner gone than I darted upon the bag; like a hawk upon his prey; and carrying it to my chamber, untied it without loſs of time, and found in it a thouſand ducats. I had juſt made an end of counting them, when my landlord who had heard what the porter ſaid, came in to ſee the contents of the bag. Thunderſtruck at the ſight of my coin ſpread upon the table—"Zounds (cried he) what a "vaſt ſum of money is here! You muſt be "a devil amongſt the women (added he, with "a ſatirical ſmile) for although you have not "been four and twenty hours in Burgos, "you have a marchioneſs already under con-"tribution."

This diſcourſe did not diſguſt me; I was tempted to leave Majuelo in his miſtake, which already gave me a ſenſible pleaſure: ſo that

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that I do not wonder that young fellows love to be thought men of intrigue. My innocence however got the better of my vanity: I undeceived my landlord, and recounted the ſtory of Donna Mencia, to which he liſtened with great attention. I then diſcloſed the ſtate of my affairs, and as he ſeemed to intereſt himſelf in my behalf, begged the aſſiſtance of his advice. Having muſed a while, "Signor "Gil Blaſs (ſaid he) I have a regard for you; "and ſince you have confidence enough in "me to unboſom yourſelf in this manner, "I will, without flattery, tell you what I "think you are fitteſt for. As you ſeem de"ſigned by nature for the court, I adviſe you "to go thither and attach yourſelf to ſome "grandee: but be ſure either to meddle in "his concerns, or enter into his pleaſures; "otherwiſe you will loſe your time. I know "the great. They look upon the zeal and "attachment of an honeſt man as nothing at "all; and mind only ſuch as are neceſſary "to them. But you have another reſource "(continued he): you are young and hand"ſome; and theſe qualifications alone with"out the leaſt glimpſe of underſtanding, are "more than ſufficient to captivate a rich wi"dow, or ſome fine lady unhappily married: "if love ruins gentlemen of fortune, it often "maintains thoſe who have none. It is my "advice therefore, that you go to Madrid; "but you muſt by no means appear without "attendants: they judge there, as in other "places,

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" places by appearance; and you will be " conſidered only, in proportion to the figure " you make. I will recommend a ſervant to " you—a faithful domeſtic—a prudent, ſober " fellow—in one word a man of my own " making. Purchaſe a couple of mules, one " for yourſelf, and another for him, and ſet " out as ſoon as poſſible."

This advice was too much to my own taſte to be neglected: I therefore, next morning, bought two handſome mules, and hired the ſervant he had recommended: he was a fellow thirty years old, of a ſimple, religious aſpect, born, as he ſaid, in the kingdom of Galatia; his name was Ambroſe de Lamela; far from being ſelfiſh like other ſervants, he made no words about his wages, but aſſured me, he would be contented with what in my goodneſs I ſhould think proper to beſtow. Having provided myſelf likewiſe with boots, and a portmanteau to hold my linen and caſh, I cleared with my landlord, and early next morning ſet out from Burgos on my way to Madrid.

CHAP. XVI.

Shews that we ought not to truſt too much to proſperity.

WE ſlept the firſt night at Duennas; and arriving at Valladolid the day following about four o'clock in the afternoon, alighted at an inn, which ſeemed one of the beſt in town. I left the care of my mules to my lacquey,

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lacquey, and going up ſtairs into a chamber whither I ordered a ſervant of the houſe to bring my portmanteau, felt myſelf a little fatigued, and without taking off my boots, threw myſelf on the bed, where I fell aſleep, inſenſibly. It being almoſt night when I waked, I called for Ambroſe, who was gone out, but returned in a little time: when I aſked where he had been, he replied with a pious air, that he was juſt come from church, where he had been to return thanks to heaven, for having preſerved him from all evil accidents on the road from Burgos even unto Valladolid: I approved of his conduct, and bade him order a fowl to the fire for my ſupper.

At that very inſtant, my landlord entered with a taper in his hand lighting in a lady who ſeemed more handſome than young, and very richly dreſſed: ſhe was ſquired by an old uſher, and a little black moor carried her train. I was not a little ſurpriſed when this lady, after having made a low curtſey, aſked if I was not Signor Gil Blas of Santillane, to which I had no ſooner anſwered in the affirmative, than ſhe quitted her attendant, and embraced me in a tranſport of joy, that redoubled my aſtoniſhment. "Bleſſed be heaven "(cried ſhe) for this meeting! You are the "perſon, Signor Cavalier, you are the very "perſon I was in queſt of!" At this preamble I thought of the paraſite at Pennaflor; and began to look upon the lady as a downright bite; when I was induced to think more favourably

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favourably of her, by what followed. " I am (added she) couſin-german to Donna Mencia of Moſquera, who has been ſo much obliged to you; and received a letter from her this morning, importing, that having heard you was going to Madrid, I would oblige her very much, by treating you handſomely, provided you ſhould paſs this way: I have been running all over the town theſe two hours, enquiring from inn to inn, about all the ſtrangers that arrived; and by the deſcription your landlord gave me of you, I imagined you might be the deliverer of my couſin. Ah! now that I have found you (continued ſhe) you ſhall ſee how ſenſible I am of the ſervices you have done my family, and in particular, to my dear couſin! You ſhall come to my houſe immediately (if you pleaſe) where you will be more conveniently lodged than here." I would have excuſed myſelf, by repreſenting to the lady, that I ſhould incommode her family, but there was no reſiſting her importunities: there was a coach waiting for us at the door, in which ſhe took care to ſee my portmanteau ſecured; " becauſe (ſaid ſhe) there are a great " many rogues in Valladolid:" an obſervation I found but too true! In ſhort, I went into the coach along with her and her ſquire, and ſuffered myſelf to be carried away from the inn, to the mortification of the landlord, who by theſe means found himſelf diſappointed of the money which he expected I would ſpend at his houſe.

Our

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Our coach having rolled ſome time, ſtopped at a pretty large houſe, where we alighted, and went up ſtairs into an handſome apartment lighted by twenty or thirty wax-candles. We paſſed through a good many ſervants, of whom the lady aſked if Don Raphael was come yet; and was anſwered in the negative; upon which, addreſſing herſelf to me, "Signor Gil "Blaſs (ſaid ſhe) I have a brother whom I "expect this evening from a villa we have "two leagues from this: he will be very "agreeably ſurpriſed to find in this houſe, a "gentleman to whom our whole family is ſo "much indebted." She had ſcarce ſpoke theſe words, when we heard a noiſe below, which (we were told) was occaſioned by the arrival of Don Raphael; and that cavalier, who was a young man of a good ſhape and genteel addreſs, appeared ſoon after. "Brother (ſaid the lady to him) I am extremely "glad of your return! you will aſſiſt me in "doing honour to Signor Gil Blas of Santillane; to whom we can never enough "ſhew our gratitude for what he has done in "behalf of our kinſwoman Donna Mencia: "there (added ſhe, giving him a letter) you "may read what ſhe has wrote on the ſubject." Don Raphael opening the letter, pronounced theſe words aloud—

My

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My dear Camilla,

SIGNOR Gil Blas of Santillane, who preſerved my honour as well as my life, has ſet out for court; and as he will doubtleſs, paſs through Valladolid, I conjure you by the blood, and ſtill more, by the friendſhip that unites us, to ſhew him all the reſpect in your power, and detain him ſome time in your family. I flatter myſelf, that you will give me that ſatisfaction, and that my deliverer will receive all manner of civility from you and my couſin Don Raphael. At Burgos, your affectionate kinſwoman,

Donna Mencia.

"How! (cried Don Raphael) is this the "gentleman to whom my couſin owes her "honour and life? ah! heaven be praiſed for "this happy rencounter!" So ſaying, he approached, and claſping me in his arms, "What "joy do I feel (ſaid he) in embracing Si"gnor Gil Blas of Santillane! my couſin the "marchioneſs had no occaſion to lay ſuch in"junctions upon us: it would have been ſuf"ficient to let us know, that you was to paſs "through Valladolid: my ſiſter and I know "very well how to behave ourſelves towards "a gentleman, who has performed ſuch an "important piece of ſervice to the perſon for "whom, of all our family, we have the moſt "tender regard." I anſwered as well as I could,

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could, to theſe compliments, which were followed by a great many more of the ſame nature, and interſperſed with a thouſand careſſes: after which, perceiving that my boots were ſtill on, they ordered their ſervants to pull them off: and we went into another room, where the cloth being laid, the gentleman, lady, and I ſat down to ſupper; during which, they ſaid a thouſand obliging things to me: not a word eſcaped me which they did not repeat as an admirable ſtroke of wit; and it was ſurprizing to ſee how attentive they were in preſenting me with all the daintieſt morſels. Don Raphael drank frequently to the health of Donna Mencia, in which I followed his example; and I imagined that Camilla, who did us juſtice, ſometimes threw certain very ſignificant looks at me. I even obſerved that ſhe choſe proper opportunities of ſo doing, as if ſhe had been afraid that her brother would perceive it. This was enough to perſuade me of the lady's being ſmitten; and I flattered myſelf with the hope of profiting by that diſcovery, during my ſhort ſtay at Valladolid. This hope induced me to yield, without difficulty, to their intreaties, when they requeſted me to ſpend a few days with them. They thanked me for my complaiſance, and the joy which Camilla diſcovered on this occaſion, confirmed me in the opinion, that I had found the way to her heart.

Don Raphael ſeeing me determined to ſtay with him ſome time, propoſed to carry me to his

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his country houſe, of which he gave me a magnificent deſcription; and talked of the pleaſures he would there entertain me with. "Sometimes (ſaid he) we will take the di-"verſion of hunting, ſometimes that of fiſh-"ing, and if you love walking, we have de-"lightful woods, and gardens in abundance: "beſides, we ſhall not want good company; "and, on the whole, I hope you will not "grow melancholy among us." I accepted his offer, and it was determined that we ſhould go to this charming place the very next day: Having projected this agreeable ſcheme, we roſe from table; and Don Raphael embracing me, in a tranſport of joy, ſaid, "Signor Gil "Blas I will leave my ſiſter to entertain you, "while I go immediately to give neceſſary "orders, and advertiſe thoſe people who I "intend ſhall be of the party." So ſaying, he went out of the room, and I contiuued converſing with the lady, who did not contradict, by her diſcourſe, the ſoft glances ſhe had thrown at me. So ſhe took hold of my hand, and, looking at my ring, ſaid, "You "have got a pretty diamond enough, but it "is a very ſmall one. Are you a connoiſſeur "in ſtones?" When I anſwered in the negative, "I am ſorry for it (ſaid ſhe) for you "might have told me what this is worth." With theſe words, ſhe ſhewed me a large ruby on her finger, and, while I examined it, added, "An uncle of mine, who was gover-"nor of the Spaniſh colonies in the Philip-"pine

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" pine iſles, made me a preſent of this ruby, " which the jewellers here in Valladolid value " at three hundred piſtoles."—" I believe it " is well worth the money (ſaid I) for it is " extremely beautiful."—" Since you are " pleaſed with it (ſhe replied) I will make " an exchange with you." And immediately ſhe pulled off my ring, and put her own on my little finger. Having made this exchange, which I looked upon as a genteel way of making a preſent, Camilla ſqueezed my hand, and looked at me in the moſt languiſhing manner; then ſtarting up abruptly, wiſhed me good night, and withdrew in great confuſion, as if ſhe had been aſhamed of diſcloſing her ſentiments.

Novice as I was in gallantry, I knew well enough how to interpret this precipitate retreat in my favour, and concluded that I ſhould paſs my time very agreeably at their villa. Full of this flattering idea, and the proſperous condition of my affairs, I locked myſelf in the chamber where I was to lie, after having ordered my ſervant to come and wake me early in the morning; but inſtead of going to reſt, a gave a looſe to thoſe agreeable reflections, which my portmanteau, that lay on the table, and my ruby, inſpired. Thank heaven! ſaid I to myſelf, if I have been unfortunate, I am no longer ſo. On one ſide a thouſand ducats; a ring, worth three hundred piſtoles on the other! My finances will not be exhauſted in a hurry! I ſee now that Ma-

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juelo did not flatter me. I ſhall inflame the hearts of a thouſand ladies at Madrid, ſince I have made ſuch an eaſy conqueſt of Camilla. The favours of that generous lady preſented themſelves to my imagination, with all their charms: and I anticipated the diverſions that Don Raphael prepared for me at his houſe in the country. In the midſt of theſe pleaſing images, however, Sleep did not fail to ſhed his poppies over me; ſo that, finding myſelf drowſy, I undreſſed, and went to bed.

Next morning, when I awaked, I perceived that it was already late, and was a good deal ſurpiſed that my valet did not appear in conſequence of the order I had given him over night. Ambroſe, ſaid I to myſelf, my faithful Ambroſe, is either at church, or very lazy to-day. But I ſoon loſt that opinion of him, and conceived one much worſe; for getting up, and miſſing my portmanteau, I ſuſpected him of having ſtolen it in the night. For further information, I opened the chamber-door, and called the hypocrite ſeveral times; at laſt, an old man, hearing me, came and ſaid, "What would you pleaſe to have, "Signor? all your people departed from my "houſe long before day."—"How (cried "I) your houſe! am I not at preſent in the "houſe of Don Raphael?"—"I don't know "who that gentleman is (ſaid he) but you "are in furniſhed lodgings, and I am the "landlord: laſt night, an hour before your "arrival, the lady who ſupped along with "you

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" you came hither, and hired this apartment " for a great lord, who, ſhe ſaid, travelled " incognito; and even paid me beforehand."

I was no longer in the dark; I gueſſed the characters of Camilla and Don Raphael, and concluded that my ſervant, being perfectly well acquainted with my affairs, had ſold me to theſe ſharpers. Inſtead of aſcribing this unlucky adventure to myſelf, and conſidering that it would not have happened to me, had I not been ſo indiſcreet as to unboſom myſelf unneceſſarily to Majuelo, I imputed all to innocent fortune, and curſed my fate a thouſand times. The owner of the houſe, to whom I recounted the adventure, which, perhaps, he knew as well as I did, ſeemed affected with my ſorrow, condoled me, and proteſted that he was very much mortified to find that ſuch a ſcene had paſſed in his houſe: but I believe notwithſtanding all his profeſſions, he was as much concerned in the trick as my landlord at Burgos, to whom, however, I have always attributed the honour of the invention.

CHAP. XVII.

How Gil Blas beſtowed himſelf after the adventure of the ready-furniſhed lodging.

HAVING heartily bewailed my misfortune, I conſidered, that inſtead of giving way to ſorrow, I ought to animate myſelf againſt miſchance; and ſummoning all my courage

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to my assistance, said to myself while I put on my clothes, by way of consolation, I am happy in that the rogues have not also carried off my apparel, and some ducats which I have still in my purse: I gave them credit for this piece of civility, and sold my boots, which they had been generous enough to leave likewise, to my landlord, for one-third of the money they had cost me. Then taking my leave of the ready-furnished lodging, without having occasion, thank God! for any body to carry my baggage, the first thing I did, was to go and see whether or not my mules were at the inn, where I alighted the preceeding night; though I was of opinion that Ambrose had not left them there; and I wish to God, my opinion of him had been always as just! for they told me, he had taken care to fetch them away that very evening: wherefore laying my account with having seen the last of them, as well as of my portmanteau, I strolled about the streets in a melancholy manner, musing on what should be my next course. I was tempted to return to Burgos, and have recourse to Donna Mencia once more; but when I reflected, that in so doing I should abuse the generosity of the lady, and, at the same time be looked upon as a booby, I relinquished that thought, swearing I should for the future be upon my guard against women; and I believe at the time, I should have mistrusted the chaste Susanna. I cast my eyes from time to time upon my ring, and when I con-

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I conſidered that it was a preſent from Camilla ſighed with vexation. Alas! thought I, though I am no connoiſſeur in rubies, I have too good reaſon to know thoſe who exchange them; and I believe it is not neceſſary that I ſhould go to a jeweller, to be perſuaded that I am a fool.

I was willing, however, to be informed of the worth of my ring, and accordingly ſhewed it to a lapidary, who valued it at three ducats. Though I was not ſurprized at this eſtimation, I wiſhed the niece of the governor of the Philippine iſles at the devil, or rather only repeated the wiſh. As I came out of the jeweller's houſe, a young fellow, who was paſſing, ſtopped to conſider me. Not being able to recollect him at firſt, although I had formerly been intimate with him, "How, "Gil Blas (ſaid he) do you pretend ignorance of me, or have two years altered the "ſon of barber Nunnez ſo much, that you "do not know him? don't you remember "Fabricius, your companion and ſchool-fellow, with whom you have ſo often diſputed, at the houſe of Doctor Godinez, upon "predicables and metaphyſical degrees?"

I remembered him before he had done ſpeaking, and we embraced one another with tranſport, "My dear friend (continued he) how "glad am I to meet thee! I can't expreſs the "joy I feel.—But (added he, with an air of "ſurprize) what do I ſee! egad! thou art "dreſſed like a prince! a fine ſword, ſilk

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" ſtocking, doublet, and cloak of velvet em-
" broidered with ſilver!—Odd'ſniggers! this
" ſmells ſtrong of intrigues! I'll hold a wa-
" ger that thou ſhareſt the bounty of ſome
" liberal old lady."—" You are miſtaken
" (ſaid I) for my affairs are not ſo flouriſhing as
" you imagine."—" Pſhaw, pſhaw (replied
" he) you affect to be a cloſe fellow; that
" fine ruby on your finger, Mr. Gil Blas,
" whence comes that, I pray you?"—" It
" comes (ſaid I) from an arrant jade. Fa-
" bricius, my dear Fabricius, far from being
" in vogue among the women at Valladolid,
" know that I am a moſt ridiculous dupe."

I pronounced theſe laſt words ſo ruefully, that Fabricus was convinced of my having been impoſed upon, in ſome ſhape or other; and preſſed me to tell him what were my reaſons for complaing of the fair-ſex. I was eaſily prevailed upon to ſatisfy his curioſity; but as my ſtory was pretty long, and beſides, we had no intention of parting in a hurry, we went into a public houſe, that we might converſe together more at our eaſe; and there, while we breakfaſted, I recounted to him all that had happened to me, ſince my departure from Oviedo. He thought my adventures were extremely odd, and after having aſſured me, that he very much ſympathized with me, in my preſent unlucky ſituation, ſaid, " We
" muſt conſole ourſelves, my child, as well
" as we can, for all the misfortunes of life.
" When a man of ſpirit is unlucky, he waits
" with

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" with patience for a more favourable con-
" juncture. One ſhould never, as Cicero ſays,
" let himſelf be ſo much dejected as to forget
" that he is a man. For my own part, I am
" of that very diſpoſition: my misfortunes
" have not been able to overwhelm me, be-
" cauſe I am always above the caprice of fate.
" For inſtance, I loved a girl of ſome faſhion
" at Oviedo, who had a tendre for me; I
" aſked her in marriage of her father, and
" he refuſed me. Another, on this occaſion,
" would have died of grief: but I (admire
" the force of genius) carried off the dear
" creature: as ſhe was paſſionate, thought-
" leſs, and vain, pleaſure, of conſequence, al-
" ways determined her to the prejudice of
" duty. I led her a dance, of ſix months,
" through the kingdom of Galicia, from
" whence, as I had given her a taſte for tra-
" velling, ſhe was deſirous of going to Portu-
" gal; but, thought proper to chooſe a new
" conductor: here was another ſubject of de-
" ſpair, but, for all that, I did not ſink un-
" der the weight of it, and wiſer than Me-
" nelaus, inſtead of declaring war againſt the
" Paris who had ſtolen my Helen, I thought
" myſelf very much obliged to him, for hav-
" ing rid my hands of her. Afterwards,
" being unwilling to return to the Aſturias,
" that I might avoid all expoſtulation with
" juſtice, I advanced into the kingdom of
" Leon, ſpending from town to town, the
" remainder of the money I had carried off

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" with my infanta; for we had not quitted Ovi-
" edo with the full hand; and arrived at Pa-
" lencia with a ſolitary ducat, out of which
" I was obliged to buy a pair of ſhoes; ſo
" that the remaining part could not laſt much
" longer: my ſituation became very perplex-
" ing, and I was even reduced to a very ſtrict
" regimen: there was no time to be loſt, I
" reſolved to go to ſervice, and hired myſelf
" to a great woollen-draper, whoſe ſon was
" an accompliſhed rake. Here, though I
" found an aſylum againſt hunger, I was not
" a little embarraſſed; for the father ordered
" me to be a ſpy upon the ſon; and the ſon
" intreated me to aſſiſt him in cheating the
" father. Being obliged to determine, I pre-
" ferred the entreaty to the command; and
" that preference coſt me my place. I after-
" wards went into the ſervice of an old pain-
" ter, who would have taught me, through
" friendſhip, the principles of his art; in the
" demonſtration of which, however, I was
" almoſt famiſhed. This gave me a diſguſt
" for painting, and a diſreliſh for Palencia
" at the ſame time; and coming to Vallado-
" lid by the greateſt good fortune in the
" world, I got into the family of one of the
" directors of the hoſpital, where I now live
" perfectly happy. Signor Manuel Ordon-
" nez, my maſter, is a man of profound
" piety, who walks with his eyes always fixed
" on the ground, and a large roſary in his
" hand. They ſay, that from his youth, hav-
" ing

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" ing nothing in view but the funds of the " poor, he attached himſelf to them with in- " defatigable zeal; and accordingly his cares " have not been ill requited; every thing " proſpers with him. What a bleſſing it is, " that he has made himſelf rich in managing " the affairs of the poor!"

Fabricius having harrangued in this manner, " I am very glad (ſaid I to him) to find " thee ſo well ſatisfied with thy condition: " but, between you and me, I think you " might play a more honourable part in the " world."—" You are miſtaken, Gil Blas " (anſwered he) there is no ſituation in life " more agreeable to one of my humour, than " that which I now enjoy: the employment " of a lacquey is troubleſome, I own, to a " ſilly fellow; but to a lad of ſpirit, it is full " of charms. A ſuperior genius that goes " to ſervice, does not confine himſelf to the " menial circumſtances of his duty, like a " ſimpleton: he goes into a family to com- " mand rather than to obey; he begins by " ſtudying his maſter, he accommodates him- " ſelf to his foibles, gains his confidence, and " then leads him by the noſe. 'Tis thus that " I have behaved towards my director. I " ſoon diſcovered his hypocriſy, and perceiv- " ed that he wanted to paſs for a perſon of " great ſanctity: I pretended to be his dupe; " that coſt nothing. I did more, I imitated " him, and acting in his preſence the ſame " farce that he plays before others, I deceived

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" the deceiver, and am, by degrees, become
" his fac totum. Under his auſpices, I hope
" one day to be concerned in the affairs of
" the poor; in which caſe I may chance to
" make my fortune too, for I find myſelf as
" well inclined towards them as he can be
" for his heart.

" Theſe are fine hopes (replied I) my dear
" Fabricius: I congratulate thee upon thy
" proſpect; and for my own part, will have
" recourſe to my former ſcheme; convert
" my embroidered habit into a caſſock, re-
" pair to Salamanca, and liſting myſelf un-
" der the banners of the univerſity, perform
" the office of a tutor."—" A fine project
" truly (cried Fabricius); an agreeable whim!
" what a fool wouldſt thou be, to turn pe-
" dant at thy age! doſt thou know, wretch!
" what thou art about to do? Soon as thou
" ſhalt be employed, the whole family will
" have their eyes on thee, and all thy actions
" will be ſcrupulouſly examined: thou muſt
" be eternally under conſtraint, clothe thy-
" ſelf with hypocriſy, and appear poſſeſſed of
" every virtue. Thou wilt not have a mo-
" ment to beſtow upon thy pleaſures. Like
" a perpetual cenſor of thy pupil, thou muſt
" paſs the day in teaching him Latin, and in
" rebuking him when he ſhall ſay or do any
" thing amiſs: and after ſo much labour and
" conſtraint what will be the fruit of thy cares?
" If the little gentleman wants capacity, it
" will be ſaid, thou haſt not given him good
" educa-

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" education, and his parents will turn thee " away, without any recompence; perhaps, " even without paying thy appointments. " Don't therefore talk to me of a preceptor's " poſt, which is like a benefice with cure of " ſouls: but commend me to the employ- " ment of a lacquey, which is a ſimple bene- " fice, encumbered with no charge. When " a maſter has vices, a ſuperior genius in his " ſevice will flatter them, and often turn " them to his advantage. A footman lives " in a good family, without the leaſt diſquiet; " for after having eaten and drank his belly- " ful, he ſleeps like the ſon of a lord, and " gives himſelf no trouble about either baker " or butcher.

" I ſhould never ha' done, child (continued " he) was I to recount all the advantages " of footmen. Take my advice, Gil Blas, " quit, for ever, the deſign of becoming tu- " tor, and follow my example."—" Yes; but, " Fabricius (ſaid I) one does not always meet " with directors; and if I ſhould reſolve to " turn lacquey, I ſhould at leaſt, chooſe to be " well ſettled."—" Oh! you are in the right " (ſaid he); that ſhall be my buſineſs: I will " inſure thee a good place, if it was for no " other reaſon, than to ſnatch a pretty fellow " from the univerſity."

The approaching miſery with which I was threatened, and the air of ſatisfaction that appeared in Fabricius, perſuading me more than his reaſons, I determined to go to ſervice:

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whereupon leaving the public houſe, my companion ſaid, "I will conduct you to the houſe "of a perſon, who is conſulted by almoſt all "the footmen out of place: he has ſpies, "who inform him of what happens in all fa- "milies; he knows where ſervants are want- "ed, and keeps an exact regiſter, not only of "the vacant places, but even of the good and "bad qualities of maſters: he is one who "was formerly a friar in ſome convent or "other; and, in ſhort, 'twas he who recom- "mended me to the place I now enjoy."

While we converſed about ſuch a ſingular office of intelligence, the ſon of barber Nunnez carried me into a blind alley, and we entered a little houſe, where we found a man about fifty years old, writing at a table. We ſaluted him very reſpectfully; but whether he was naturally proud, or accuſtomed to ſee lacqueys and coachmen only, he had contracted an habit of receiving people cavalierly, and did not riſe from his ſeat, but contented himſelf with making a ſlight inclination of the head. He looked hard at me, however, and I could eaſily perceive he was very much ſurprized that a young man dreſſed in embroidered velvet ſhould want to turn valet; he had more reaſon to think I was come to be provided with one: but he did not continue long in ſuſpence, with regard to my intention; For Fabricius, accoſting him at once, ſaid, "Signor Arias de Londonna, give me "leave to preſent one of my beſt friends to "you:

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" you: he is a young man of a good family, " whom misfortunes have reduced to the ne- " ceſſity of going to ſervice. Pray inform " him of a good place, and depend upon his " gratitude."—" Gentlemen (anſwered A- " rias coldly) this is the manner of you all: " before you are fixed, you make the fineſt " promiſes in the world; but when once you are " well ſettled, you think no more of them." " How! (replied Fabricius (do you complain " of me? have not I done honourably by " you?"—" You might have done better ſtill, " (ſaid Arias) your place is worth a clerk's " employment; and you have paid me, as if " I had introduced you to the houſe of an " author." Here I interpoſed, and told Signor Arias, that to ſhow him I was not ungrateful, my acknowledgement ſhould precede his ſervice; at the ſame time, taking out two ducats, I put them into his hand, with a promiſe that I ſhould not ſtop there, provided I ſhould find myſelf in a good family.

He ſeemed pleaſed with my behaviour, and ſaid he loved to be treated in that manner: " There are (continued he) excellent poſts va- " cant, which I will mention in order, that " you may chooſe one that is to your liking." So ſaying, he put on his ſpectacles, opened a regiſter which lay on the table, turned over ſome leaves, and began to read as follows: " A lacquey is wanted for Captain Torbellino, " a paſſionate, cruel, whimſical man, who " grumbles inceſſantly, ſwears, beats, and com- " monly

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" monly maims, his ſervants."—" Let us " paſs on to the other (cried I, at that pic- " ture) that captain is not to my taſte." Arias ſmiled at my vivacity, and proceeded in this manner: " Donna Manuela of Sandoval, " a ſuperannuated widow, full of peviſhneſs " and caprice, has, at preſent, never a foot- " man: ſhe keeps but one for ordinary, and " him never a whole day. There has been " one livery ſuit in the houſe theſe ten years, " which ſerves all valets who enter, of what " ſize and ſhape ſoever they may be: but it " may be ſaid they only try it on; for it is " ſtill as good as new, although it has been " worn by two thouſand lacquies. Doctor " Alvar Fannez, a phiſician and chymiſt, " wants a ſervant: his domeſticks are well fed, " handſomely entertained, and have, more- " over, great wages; but he tries experiments " upon them with his medicines, and there " are often vacant places in his houſe."

" Oh! I believe it (cried Fabricius, laugh- " ing) upon my conſcience you ſhow us abun- " dance of fine places."—" Have patience, " (ſaid Arias de Londonna) we have not yet " done; there are ſome that I am ſure will " pleaſe you." Then he continued to read in theſe terms. " Donna Alfonſa dè Solis, " an old devotee, who ſpends two thirds of " the day at church, and inſiſts upon her foot- " man being always along with her, has " not had a lacquey theſe three weeks. The " licentiate Sedillo, an old cannon of the chap-

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" ter of this city, yeſterday, in the evening, " turned away his footman."—" Halt there, " Signor Arias de Londonna (cried Fabri- " cius, in this place) we will ſtick to this laſt " poſt. The licenciate Sedillo is one of my " maſter's friends, with whom I am perfectly " well acquainted: I know that he has for " houſekeeper an old devotee called Dame " Jacinta, who diſpoſes of every thing in the " houſe: it is one of the beſt families in " Valladolid, for a ſervant who loves a quiet " life and good cheer: beſides, the cannon is " old and infirm, very much ſubject to the " gout, and will ſoon make his will; ſo that " there is room to hope for a good legacy. " What a charming proſpect for a footman! " Gil Blas (added he, turning towards me) " let us looſe no time, my lad, but go inſtant- " ly to the houſe of the licentiate, where I " will myſelf preſent you, and anſwer for thy " character." At theſe words, for fear of loſing ſuch a fair opportunity, we took our leave, in a hurry, of Signor Arias, who aſſured me for my money, that if I ſhould be baulked of this place, I might depend upon his recommending me to one as good.

The End of the FIRST BOOK.

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THE ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS OF SANTILLANE.

BOOK II.

CHAP I.

Fabricius conducts Gil Blas, and introduces him to the licentiate Sedillo. The situation of this canon. A description of his housekeeper.

WE were so much afraid of coming too late, that we made but one leap from the alley to the house of the old licentiate. We knocked at the door, which was opened by a girl ten years old, who passed for the housekeeper's niece, in spite of scandal; and asking if the canon could be spoke with, Dame Jacinta appeared: she was a person already arrived at the age of discretion, but still handsome; and, in particular, I admired the freshness of her complexion. She wore a long gown

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gown of coarſe ſtuff, with a large leathern girdle, from one ſide of which hung a bunch of keys, and from the other a roſary of great beads. As ſoon as we perceived her we bowed, with profound reſpect, and ſhe returned the ſalute very civilly, but with a modeſt deportment and downcaſt eyes.

" Having underſtood (ſaid my comrade to " her) that maſter licentiate Sedillo has oc- " caſion for an honeſt valet, I am come to " preſent one, with whom, I hope, he will " be ſatisfied." The houſekeeper, at theſe words, lifting her eyes, ſurveyed me with attention, and, not being able to reconcile my embroidery with the diſcourſe of Fabricius, aſked if it was I who wanted the vacant place. " Yes (ſaid the ſon of Nuñez) it is this " young man, who, notwithſtanding his ap- " pearance, has met with misfortunes that " oblige him to go to ſervice. But he will " ſoon forget his miſhaps (added he, with " an inſinuating air) if he has the happineſs " to come into this family, and live with the " virtuous Jacinta, who deſerves to be houſe- " keeper to the patriarch of the Indies." At theſe words, this pious governante moved her eyes from me, to conſider the polite perſon who ſpoke, and, ſtruck with his features, which were not altogether unknown to her, " I have (ſaid ſhe) a confuſed notion of hav- " ing ſeen you ſomewhere! pray aſſiſt my " recollection."—" Chaſte Jacinta (anſwered " Fabricius) I am proud of having attracted " your

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" your notice: I have been twice in this houſe " with my maſter Signor Manuel Ordonnez, " director of the hoſpital."—" Ha! you're in " the right (replied the houſekeeper); I re- " member it very well, and recollect your " face. Ah! ſince you belong to Signor " Ordonnez, you muſt be a lad of worth " and honeſty: your place proclaims your " virtue, and this young man could not have " a better recommendation. Come (added " ſhe) I will bring you to ſpeak with Signor " Sedillo, who, I believe, will be very glad " to have a ſervant of your preſenting."

We followed her accordingly. The canon lodged on the ground floor, which conſiſted of four rooms well wainſcotted; in one of which ſhe deſired us to wait a little, while ſhe went into the next, where the licentiate was. After ſhe had ſtaid with him ſome time in order to give him his cue, ſhe came and told us, that we might go in. We perceived the old goutefied canon, buried as it were in an elbow chair, with pillows under his head and arms, and his legs ſupported on a large down cuſhion. While we approached him, we did not ſpare bows; and Fabricius being ſtill ſpokeſman, not only repeated what he had ſaid of me to the houſekeeper, but likewiſe extolled my merit, and enlarged chiefly on the honour which I had acquired in philoſophical diſputes, while I was with Doctor Godinez; as if it was neceſſary that a canon's footman ſhould be a profound philoſopher.

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ſopher. Nevertheleſs this fine eulogium that he beſtowed on me, did not fail to caſt a miſt before the eyes of the licentiate, who obſerving beſides, that I was not diſagreeable to Dame Jacinta, ſaid to my recommender, "Friend, I take into my ſervice the young "man whom thou haſt brought. I am ſa"tisfied, and conceive a favourable opinion "of his morals, ſince he is preſented by a "domeſtic of my good friend Signor Or"donnez."

As ſoon as Fabricius ſaw that I was engaged he made a low bow to the canon, another ſtill lower to the governante, and withdrew, very well ſatisfied, after having whiſpered to me that we ſhould ſee one another often, and that I had nothing to do but to ſtay where I was.—When he was gone, the licentiate aſked my name, and reaſons for leaving my native country; and by theſe queſtions engaged me, in preſence of Dame Jacinta, to recount my ſtory. They were both very much diverted, eſpecially with the account of my laſt adventure, Camilla and Don Raphael tickling them ſo much, that it was like to have coſt the old canon his life; for while he laughed with all his force, he was ſeized with ſuch a violent fit of coughing, that I imagined it would have been his laſt. As he had not yet made his will, you may eaſily gueſs how his houſekeeper was alarmed: trembling and aſtoniſhed ſhe ran to the aſſiſtance of the good man, rubbed his forehead, and clapped him on

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on the back, as is practiſed with children when they have the chin-cough. However, this was but a falſe alarm: the old man ceaſed to cough, and his governante to torment him; and I would have finiſhed my ſtory, had not Dame Jacinta, who dreaded another fit, oppoſed it, and carried me out of the canon's chamber into a wardrobe, where, among ſeveral ſuits of clothes, was that of my predeceſſor. This ſhe made me put on, and leave my own in its room, which I was not ſorry to preſerve, in hopes that it would ſtill be of uſe to me. After which we went to prepare dinner.

I was not a novice in the art of dreſſing victuals, having ſerved a happy apprenticeſhip under Dame Leonarda, who might have paſſed for a good cook: ſhe was not, however, comparable to Dame Jacinta, who, for aught I know, would have gained the palm from the cook of the archbiſhop of Toledo. She excelled in every thing: her ſoups were exquiſite, on account of her art in chooſing and mixing the different kinds of gravy, of which they were compoſed; and her haſhes were ſeaſoned in ſuch a manner, as rendered them extremely agreeable to the palate.—When dinner was ready, we returned into the canon's chamber, where, while I laid the cloth on a table ſet juſt by his elbow chair, the houſekeeper tucked a napkin under the old man's chin, and tied it over his ſhoulders. In a moment after I brought a meſs of porridge, that

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that might have been preſented to the moſt celebrated director of Madrid; and two courſes, which would have ſtimulated the ſenſuality of a viceroy, had not Dame Jacinta been ſparing of her ſpices for fear of inflaming the gout of the licentiate.—At ſight of theſe delicate diſhes, my old maſter, whom I believed impotent in all his members, ſhowed me, that he had not as yet loſt entirely the uſe of his arms: he helped to diſencumber himſelf of his pillows, and chearfully prepared himſelf for eating.—Though his hand ſhook, it did not refuſe its ſervice, but went and came with great expedition; in ſuch a manner, however that it ſpilt upon the tablecloth and napkin one half of what was intended for his mouth.—I took away the ſoup when he had done with it, and brought in a roaſted partridge, flanked with two quails, which Dame Jacinta carved for him.—She took care alſo to make him drink frequently large draughts of wine, a little diluted in a large and deep ſilver cup, which ſhe held to his mouth, as if he had been a child of fifteen months. He fell tooth and nail upon his courſe, and did no leſs honour to the birds than he had done to the porridge; but when he had ſtuffed himſelf to the tongue, the devotee untied his napkin, replaced his pillows, and left him in quiet to take his afternoon's nap in his chair; while we, having uncovered the table, went to dinner in our turn.

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In this manner did our canon dine every day, who, for aught I know, was the greateſt glutton of the whole chapter: though his ſupper was commonly more ſlight, conſiſting, for the moſt part, of a pullet and ſome conſerves. I fed well in this houſe, and lived a very peaceable life, having only one grievance, which was no other than being obliged to watch my maſter, and paſs the whole night like a nurſe.—Beſides a retention of urine, that obliged him to aſk for his chamber-pot ten times in an hour, he was ſubject to profuſe ſweats; and when this happened, it was my buſineſs to ſhift him. "Gil Blas (ſaid "he, the ſecond night) thou haſt activity and "addreſs; and I foreſee that I ſhall be very "well pleaſed with thy ſervice.—I recom- "mend to thee above all things to behave "thyſelf reſpectfully towards Dame Jacinta; "ſhe is a wench who has ſerved me theſe fif- "teen years with a ſingular zeal, and takes "ſuch care of my perſon, that I can never "enough ſhow my gratitude: wherefore I "own ſhe is more dear to me than all my re- "lations. For the love of her I have turned "out of doors my nephew, my own ſiſter's "ſon, who paid no reſpect to the poor girl; "and, far from doing juſtice to the ſincere "attachment ſhe has for me, the inſolent boy "treated her as an hypocrite; for in this age "all virtue appears hypocriſy to young peo- "ple.—Thank heaven! I have got rid of "the ſcoundrel: I prefer the love that is ma-

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" nifeſted for me to all the ties of blood, and " am ſwayed only by the benefits I receive." —" You are in the right, ſir (ſaid I to the " licentiate): gratitude ought to have more " weight with us than the laws of nature."— " Doubtleſs (he replied) and people will ſee " by my laſt will, that I have no regard for " my relations. My houſekeeper will have " a good ſhare and thou ſhalt not be forgot, " provided that thou goeſt on to ſerve me " as thou haſt begun. The footman whom " I turned away yeſterday has loſt a good " legacy by his own folly; if that paultry " fellow had not, by his miſbehaviour, oblig- " ed me to diſmiſs him, I would have made " his fortune; but he was a proud coxcomb, " who was deficient in his reſpect for Dame " Jacinta; and an idle raſcal, who dreaded " the ſmalleſt trouble.—He, forſooth, did " not love to watch over me, and looked up- " on it as a great fatigue to ſpend the night " in contributing to my eaſe."—" Ah, the " wretch! (cried I, as if the genius of my " friend had inſpired me) he was not worthy " of living with ſuch an honourable maſter! " A lad who has the happineſs of appertain- " ing unto you, ought to be indefatigable in " his zeal: he ought to make a pleaſure of " his duty, and not to think himſelf fatigued " even when he ſweats blood and water for " your ſervice."

I perceived that theſe words were very agreeable to the licentiate, who was no leſs ſatisfied with

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with the aſſurance I gave him of being always perfectly reſigned to the will of Dame Jacinta. Willing therefore to paſs for a valet whom fatigue could not diſpirit, I did my duty with the beſt grace I could aſſume, and never complained of being up all night; a circumſtance which, however, I found very diſagreeable; and had it not been for the legacy with which I fed my hopes, I ſhould have been very ſoon diſguſted with my condition.—Indeed I ſlept ſome hours in the day-time; and the governante, to do her juſtice, had a good deal of regard for me.—This muſt be aſcribed to the care I took in gaining her good graces, by the moſt complaiſant and reſpectful behaviour; when I was at table with her and her niece, whoſe name was Ineſilla, I ſhifted their plates, filled wine, and ſerved them with a moſt particular attention; by which means I inſinuated myſelf into their friendſhip. One day, while Dame Jacinta was gone out to market, ſeeing myſelf alone with Ineſilla, I began to converſe with her, and aſked if her father and mother were ſtill alive. "O! not at all (anſwered ſhe) they are dead long—long ago, —my good aunt told me ſo. As for my own part, I never ſaw them." I ſincerely believed the little girl, though her anſwer was not categorical; and put her into ſuch a humour of talking, that ſhe told me more of the matter than I wanted to know. She informed me, or rather I gathered from her artleſs chat, that her good aunt had a very good friend,

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friend, who lived likewiſe with an old canon, whoſe temporalities he managed; and that theſe happy domeſticks expected to join the pillage of their maſters by a marriage, the ſweets of which they taſted before-hand. I have already obſerved, that Dame Jacinta, though ſomewhat ſuperannuated, had ſtill a freſhneſs of complexion. True indeed, ſhe ſpared nothing to preſerve it; for, beſides a glyſter which ſhe took every morning, ſhe ſwallowed during the day, and when ſhe went to bed, ſome excellent jellies of her own compoſing, and ſlept ſoundly all night, while I watched my maſter: but that which, perhaps, contributed more than any thing to preſerve her colour from fading was an iſſue, which Ineſilla told me ſhe had in each leg.

CHAP. II.

In what manner the canon was treated when he fell ſick—the conſequence of it; and the legacy he left Gil Blas.

I Served the licentiate Sedillo three months without complaining of the bad nights he made me paſs; at the end of which time he fell ſick of a fever, and felt his gout increaſed by the pain which it occaſioned; ſo that, for the firſt time in his life, which had been long, he had recourſe to phyſicians, and ſent for Doctor Sangrado, whom all Valladolid looked upon as another Hippocrates. Dame Jacinta would have been better pleaſed, if the canon had

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had begun by making his will, and even dropped ſome hints on the ſubject; but, beſides that he did not believe himſelf near his end, in ſome certain things he was extremely obſtinate: I therefore went in ſearch of Dr. Sangrado, and brought him to the houſe. He was a tall, meagre, pale man, who had kept the ſhears of Clotho employed during forty years at leaſt.—This learned phyſician had a very ſolemn appearance, weighed his diſcourſe, and gave an emphaſis to his expreſſions: his reaſoning was geometrical, and his opinions extremely ſingular.

After having examined the ſymptoms of my maſter's diſeaſe, he ſaid to him with a very phyſical air, "The buſineſs here is to "ſupply the defect of perſpiration, which is "obſtructed: others, in my place, would "doubtleſs preſcribe ſaline draughts, diuretics, diaphoretics, and ſuch medicines as "abound with mercury and ſulpher; but cathartics and ſudorifics are pernicious drugs, "and all the preparations of chymiſtry are "only calculated to do miſchief: for my own "part, I practiſe a method more ſimple, and "more ſure.—Pray, what is your ordinary "diet?"—"My uſual food (replied the canon) is broth and juicy meat."—"Broth "and juicy meat! (cried the doctor, ſurprized) truly, I do not wonder to find you "ſick: ſuch delicious victuals are poiſoned "pleaſures, and ſnares that luxury ſpreads "for mankind, in order to ruin them the

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" more effectually. You muſt renounce all " palatable food: the moſt ſalutary is that " which is moſt inſipid; for as the blood is " inſipid, it requires ſuch victuals as partake " the moſt of its own nature.—And do you " drink wine? (added he.")—" Yes (ſaid " the licentiate) wine diluted."—" O! di- " luted as much as you pleaſe (replied the " phyſician): what an irregularity is here? " what a frightful regimen! you ought to " have been dead long ago. How old are " you, pray?"—" I am going in my ſixty- " ninth year (replied the canon.")—" Right " (ſaid the phyſician); an early old age is al- " ways the fruit of intemperance. If you " had drank nothing elſe than pure water all " your life, and had been ſatisfied with ſimple " nouriſhment, ſuch as boiled apples for ex- " ample, you would not now be tormented " with the gout, and all your limbs would " perform their functions with eaſe. I do " not deſpair, however, of ſetting you to " rights again, provided you be wholly re- " ſigned to my directions."

The licentiate having promiſed to obey him in all things, Sangrado ſent me for a ſurgeon, whom he named, and ordered him to take from my maſter ſix good porringers of blood, as the firſt effort, in order to ſupply the want of perſpiration, Then he ſaid to the ſurgeon, " Maſter Martin Omnez, return in three hours, " and take as much more: and repeat the " ſame evacuation to-morrow. It is a groſs

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" error to think that blood is neceſſary for " the preſervation of life: a patient cannot " be blooded too much; for as he is obliged " to perform no conſiderable motion or ex- " erciſe, but juſt only to breathe, he has no " more occaſion for blood than a man who is " aſleep; life, in both, conſiſting in the pulſe " and reſpiration only." The doctor having ordered frequent and copious evacuations of this kind, he told us, that we muſt make the canon drink warm water inceſſantly; aſſuring us that water, drank in abundance, was the true ſpecific in all diſtempers whatever. And when he went away, he told Dame Jacinta and me, with an air of confidence, that he would anſwer for his patient's life, provided we would treat him in the manner he had preſcribed. The governante, who poſſibly thought otherwiſe of this method, proteſted that it ſhould be followed with the utmoſt exactneſs. Accordingly we ſet about warming water with all diſpatch; and as the phyſician had recommended to us, above all things, not to be too ſparing of it, we made my maſter drink for the firſt doſe two or three pints, at as many draughts. An hour after we repeated it, and returning to the charge, from time to time, overwhelmed his ſtomach with a deluge of water: the ſurgeon ſeconding us, on the other hand, by the quantity of blood which he drew from him, in leſs than two days the old canon was reduced to extremity.

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This good prieſt, being quite ſpent, ſaid to me with a feeble voice, as I preſented him with a large glaſs of the ſpecific, "Hold, Gil "Blas, give me no more of it, my friend: "I ſee plainly that I muſt die, in ſpite of the "virtues of water; and though there is ſcarce "a drop of blood left in my body, I don't "find myſelf a whit the better: which is a "plain proof, that the moſt expert phyſician "in the world cannot prolong our days, when "their fatal period is arrived: go therefore "and fetch a notary, for I want to make my "will" At theſe laſt words, which I was not ſorry to hear, I affected to ſeem melancholy, and concealing the deſire I had to execute his commiſſion, "Well, but Sir (ſaid I) you are not yet ſo low, thank God, but "that you may recover."—"No, no, child "(replied he) it is all over with me. I feel "the gout mounting upwards, and death approaching. Make haſte, therefore, and do "as I bid thee." I perceived, ſure enough, that he changed viſibly, and the affair appeared ſo urgent that I went out as faſt as poſſible to fulfil his orders; leaving with him Dame Jacinta, who was more afraid than I that he would die inteſtate. I went into the houſe of the firſt notary I was directed to, and finding him at home, "Sir (ſaid I) the licentiate "Sedillo, my maſter, draws towards his end, "and wants to have his laſt will made; ſo "that there is not a moment to loſe." The notary, who was a briſk old man, and took

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delight in rallying, aſked what phyſician attended the canon; I anſwered, Doctor Sangrado.—At that name, ſeizing his hat and cloak in a hurry, "Zooks! (cried he) let us "make haſte; for the doctor is ſo expedi- "tious that he ſeldom gives his patients time "to ſend for notaries: that man has chouſed "me out of a great many jobs."

So ſaying, he followed me with great eagerneſs, and while we walked together at a good pace, that we might arrive before he ſhould be at the laſt gaſp, "Sir (ſaid I to him) you "know that a teſtator at the point of death "is apt to forget things: now, if my maſter "ſhould not remember me, I beg you will "remind him of my zeal and attachment."— "That I will, my child: (replied the little "notary) thou mayeſt depend upon me for "that. I will even adviſe him to give thee "ſomething conſiderable; let him be never "ſo little diſpoſed to reward thy ſervice." The licentiate, when we came into his chamber, had ſtill the uſe of his ſenſes, and Dame Jacinta, who was with him, her viſage bathed in tears, which ſhe had at command, had played her part, and beſpoke the good man's benevolence. So that ſhe and I left the notary alone with him, and went into the antichamber, where, meeting the ſurgeon whom the doctor had ſent to make one evacuation more, we ſtopped him. "Hold, Mr. Martin (ſaid "the governante) you cannot go into Signor "Sedillo's chamber at preſent; he is dictat-

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"ing his laſt will to a notary who is with "him; when that is done, you ſhall have "leave to do your office."

This pious gentlewoman and I were much afraid that the licentiate would die before his will could be finiſhed: but happily for us, the deed that occaſioned our diſquiet was executed: and the notary, finding me in his way as he came out, clapped me on the ſhoulder, ſaying, with a ſmile, "Gil Blas is not forgotten." Theſe words inſpired me with exceſſive joy; and I thought myſelf ſo much obliged to my maſter for having remembered me, that I promiſed to pray with all my heart for his ſoul, after his death, which ſoon happened; for the ſurgeon having blooded him again, the poor old man, who was but too much exhauſted before, expired almoſt during the operation. As he breathed his laſt ſighs, the phyſician came in, and looked very fooliſhly, notwithſtanding his long practice of diſpatching patients. Nevertheleſs, far from imputing the canon's death to his watery draughts and evacuations, he obſerved as he went out, with an air of indifference, that the patient had not loſt blood enough, nor drank a ſufficient quantity of warm water; while the executioner of this ſublime art, I mean the ſurgeon, ſeeing alſo, that there was no more occaſion for his office, followed Doctor Sangrado.

As ſoon as the breath went out of our patron's body, Dame Jacinta, Ineſilla, and I, raiſed a concert of mournful cries which were

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heard all over the neighbourhood: the governante especially, who had the greatest cause to rejoice, uttered such doleful accents, that one would have thought she was the most afflicted person upon earth; and the chamber was instantly filled with people drawn thither more by curiosity than compassion. The relations of the deceased no sooner learned the news of his death than they poured into the house, to seal up every thing, and found the house-keeper in such affliction, that they imagined at first, the canon had not made his will: but they soon understood that there was one sanctioned by all the usual formalities; which when they came to open, and saw that the testator had disposed of his best effects in favour of Dame Jacinta and the little girl, they made his funeral speech in terms not much to the honour of his memory: they pronounced an eulogium on the devotee, at the same time, and even bestowed some praises on me, who, I must own deserved some at their hands: for the licentiate (rest his soul)! in order to make me remember him as long as I should live, explained himself in an article of his will, with regard to me, in this manner.—"Item, as Gil Blas is a "young man of some understanding already, "in order to complete his learning, I leave to "him my library, all my books and manu-"scripts without exception."

I could not conceive where this pretended library could be, having never perceived any such thing in the house. I knew only of a few papers,

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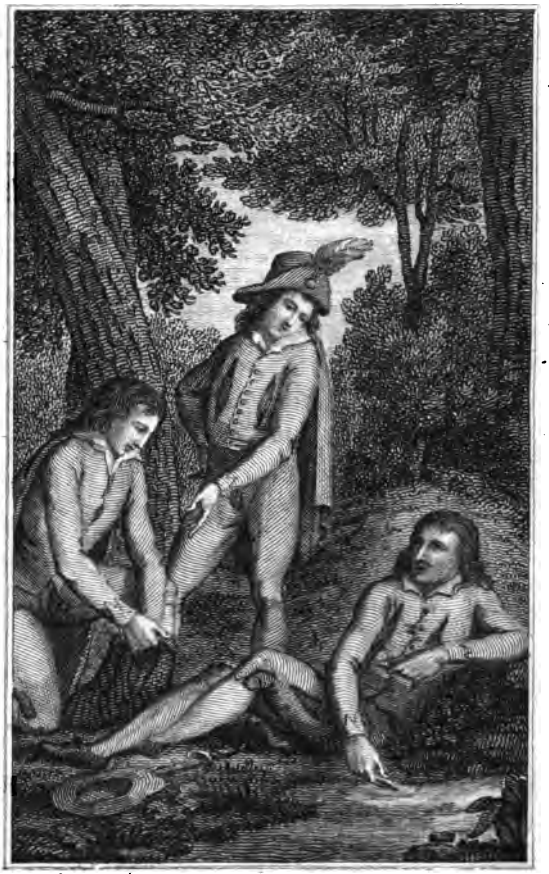

Ansell del. Skelton Sculp.

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papers, with five or six volumes that ſtood upon a ſhelf in my maſter's cloſet; and theſe were my legacy; though the books could not be of any great ſervice to me, one being intitled, The Complete Houſewife: another treated of, Indigeſtion and the Method of Cure; the reſt were, The four Parts of the Breviary, which the moths had almoſt conſumed. With regard to the Manuſcripts, the moſt curious contained all the proceedings of a law-ſuit in which he was once engaged for his prebend. After having examined the lagacy with more attention then it deſerved, I left it to the relations who envied me ſo much. I gave them back the very clothes I wore, and reſumed my own; claiming my wages only, as the fruit of my ſervice, and reſolving to ſeek a place elſewhere. As for Dame Jacinta, beſides the money which was left to her, ſhe was in poſſeſſion of ſome valuable effects, which by the aſſiſtance of her good friend, ſhe had found means to ſecrete during the licentiate's laſt illneſs.

CHAP. III.

Gil Blas engages himſelf in the ſervice of Doctor Sangrado, and becomes a celebrated phyſician.

I Reſolved to viſit Signor Arias de Londonna, and conſult his regiſter for a new place; but as I was juſt going into the blind alley where he lived, I met Doctor Sangrado, whom I had not ſeen ſince the death of my maſter, and took the freedom to ſalute him. He recollect-

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ed me immediately, although I had changed my dreſs, and expreſſing ſome joy at ſeeing me, "Art thou there, my child (ſaid he) I was juſt thinking of thee; having occaſion for a good lad to ſerve me, I imagined that thou wouldſt anſwer my purpoſe very well; if thou canſt read and write."—"Sir (anſwered I) in that particular I can do your buſineſs." "Say'ſt thou ſo (ſaid he); then thou art the man I want: come to my houſe, where thou ſhalt find every thing agreeable: I will treat thee with diſtinction; and though I give no wages, thou ſhalt want for nothing: I will take care to maintain thee handſomely: and will even diſcover to thee, the great myſtery of curing all diſeaſes: in a word, thou ſhalt rather be my pupil than my ſervant."

I accepted the doctor's propoſal, in hopes of making myſelf illuſtrious in phyſick, under the auſpices of ſuch a learned maſter; and he carried me home with him on the inſtant, in order to initiate me in the employment for which I was deſigned. This employment conſiſted in writing the names and places of abode of the patients who ſent for him while he was abroad: for this purpoſe, there was in the houſe, a regiſter, in which an old woman, who was his ſole domeſtic, ſet down their ſeveral directions: but beſides that ſhe was utterly ignorant of ſpelling, ſhe wrote ſo ill that for the moſt part it was impoſſible to decypher her ſcrawl. I was inveſted with the charge of this book, which might have been with great juſtice ſtiled a re-

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a regiſter of the dead; for almoſt all the people whoſe names it contained gave up the ghoſt. I inſerted in it (to uſe the expreſſion) the names of thoſe people who were to ſet out for the other world, as the clerk of a ſtage-coach-office regiſters thoſe who take places. The pen was ſeldom out of my hand, becauſe there was not at that time a phyſician in Valladolid of more credit than Doctor Sangrado, who had acquired great reputation with the publick, by a pomp of words, a ſolemn air, and ſome lucky cures which had done him more honour than he deſerved.

He did not want practice, nor of conſequence money, which however, did not make us fare the better, his houſekeeping being extremely parſimonious; our ordinary food conſiſting of peaſe, beans, boiled codlins, or cheeſe; which aliments (he ſaid) were agreeable to the ſtomach, as being moſt proper for trituration, in other words, eaſily brayed. Notwithſtanding this his opinion, however, he did not approve of our eating a belly-full even of them: in which, to be ſure, he was much in the right: but, if he forbid his maid and me to eat a great deal, he allowed us, by way of recompence, to drink as much water as we could ſwallow: far from reſtricting us in this particular, he would ſometimes ſay, "Drink, my children, health conſiſts in the ſuppleneſs and humectation of the parts: drink water in great abundance: it is an univerſal menſtruum that diſſolves all kinds of ſalt. When the courſe

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of the blood is too languid, this accelerates its motion; and when too rapid, checks its impetuosity." The honest doctor was so well convinced of the truth of this doctrine, that he himself drank nothing but water, though he was well stricken in years. He defined old age, a natural decay, that withers and consumes us: and in consequence of this definition, deplored the ignorance of those who call wine "the milk of old men:" for he maintained that the juice of the grape wastes and destroys them; and with great eloquence observed, that this fatal liquor is to them, as to all the world, a treacherous friend and deceitful pleasure.

In spite of all this fine reasoning, I had not been eight days in the house, when I was seized with a looseness, and began to feel great disorder in my bowels, which I was rash enough to ascribe to the universal dissolvent and meagre subsistence on which I lived. I complained of it to my master, in hopes that he would relent and allow me a little wine at meals: but he was too much an enemy to that liquor to gratify my expectation. "If thou feelest in thyself (said he to me) any reluctance to simple element, there are innocent aids in plenty, that will support thy stomach against the insipid taste of water; sage, for example, and baum will give it an admirable flavour; and an infusion of corn-poppy, gillyflower, and rosemary, will render it still more delicious.

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Notwithſtanding all he could ſay in praiſe of water and the excellent beverages he taught me to compoſe, I drank of it with ſuch moderation, that perceiving my temperance, he ſaid, "Why, truly, Gil Blas, I am not at all ſurpriſed, that thou doſt not enjoy good health. Thou doſt not drink enough, my friend. Water taken in ſmall quantities ſerves only to diſentangle the particles of the bile, and give them more activity; whereas they ſhould be drowned in a copious dilution: don't be afraid, my child, that abundance of water will weaken and relax thy ſtomach: lay aſide that panic fear which perhaps thou entertaineſt of plentiful drinking. I will warrant the conſequence, and if thou doſt not look upon me as a ſufficient bondſman, Celſus himſelf ſhall be thy ſecurity. That Roman oracle beſtows an admirable eulogium on water, and afterwards ſays, in expreſs terms, that thoſe who excuſe their drinking of wine, on account of a weak ſtomach, do a manifeſt injury to that organ, by uſing ſuch a cloak for their own ſenſuality."

As it would not have looked well for me to ſhow myſelf intractable in the very beginning of my career in phyſic; I ſeemed perſuaded of his being in the right, and will even own I was effectually convinced; ſo that I continued to drink water on the guaranty of Celſus, or rather to drown my bile in copious draughts of that liquor; and although I felt myſelf every day more and more incommoded by it, prejudice got the better of experience; ſo happily was

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was I diſpoſed by nature, for becoming a phyſician. I could not always, however, reſiſt the violence of my diſorder, which increaſed to ſuch a degree, that I reſolved, at length, to leave Doctor Sangrado; but he inveſted me with a new employment which made me change that reſolution. "Hark'ee, my child (ſaid he one day) I am not one of thoſe harſh and ungrateful maſters who let their domeſtics grow grey in their ſervice, before they recompenſe them. I am well pleaſed with thy behaviour, I have a regard for thee, and without further delay will make thy fortune. I will immediately diſcloſe to thee the whole extent of that ſalutary art which I have profeſſed ſo many years. Other phyſicians make this conſiſt in the knowledge of a thouſand difficult ſciences: but I intend to go a ſhorter way to work, and ſpare thee the trouble of ſtudying pharmacy, anatomy, botany, and phyſic: know, my friend, all that is required is to bleed the patients and make them drink warm water. This is the ſecret of curing all the diſtempers incident to man. Yes! that wonderful ſecret which I reveal to thee, and which nature, impenetrable to my brethren, hath not been able to hide from my reſearches, is contained in theſe two points, of plentiful bleeding and frequent draughts of water. I have nothing more to impart; thou knoweſt phyſic to the very bottom, and reaping the fruit of my long experience, art become in a twinkling as ſkilful as I am. Thou mayeſt (continued he)

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eaſe me not a little, at preſent; in the morning thou ſhalt keep our regiſter, and in the afternoon go and viſit a part of my patients: while I take care of the nobility and clergy, thou ſhalt go in my room to the houſes of tradeſmen, where I am called: and when thou ſhalt have practiſed ſome time, I will procure thy admiſſion into the faculty. Thou art learned, Gil Blas, before thou turneſt phyſician; whereas others preſcribe a long time, generally all their lives, without ever becoming learned."

I thanked the doctor for having enabled me with ſuch diſpatch to ſerve as his deputy; and, as an acknowledgement of his favours, aſſured him that I would follow his maxims as long as I lived, even if they ſhould be contrary to thoſe of Hippocrates. But this aſſurance was not altogether ſincere; for I diſapproved of his opinion with regard to water, and reſolved to drink wine every day, when I went out to viſit my patients. I committed my own clothes to a peg for a ſecond time, and put on a ſuit of my maſter's, that I might appear in all reſpects like a phyſician: after which, I prepared myſelf for exerciſing medicine at the expence of whom it ſhould concern. My *coup d'eſſai* being upon an Alguazil who was ill of a pleuriſy, I ordered him to be blooded without mercy and filled to the tongue with water: I went afterwards into the houſe of a paſtry-cook who lay roaring with the gout, and whoſe blood I was no more ſparing of than the Alguazil's

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Alguazils; taking care also not to restrict him in the article of water. For these prescriptions, I received twelve rials, which made me so enamoured of the profession, that I thought "the more mischief the better sport." Coming out of the pastry-cook's house, I met Fabricius, whom I had not seen since the death of the licentiate Sedillo; and who, having looked at me some minutes with surprize, set his hands in his sides, and burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter. It was not without reason; for having a cloak that trailed on the ground, with a doublet and breeches that would have served a man four times as big as me, my figure was truly original. I let him laugh till he was tired, not without being tempted to follow his example; but I constrained myself in order to preserve decorum, and the better ape the physician, who is no risible animal. If my ludicrous appearance had excited the mirth of Fabricius, my gravity increased it; and when he had indulged it sufficiently, "Upon my conscience, Gil Blas (said he) thou art pleasantly equipped. Who the devil has disguised thee in this manner?"—"Softly, friend (replied I) softly.—Learn to show more respect for another Hippocrates; and know, that I am the deputy of Doctor Sangrado, the most celebrated physician of Valladolid, with whom I have lived these three weeks. He has taught me physic to the very bottom, and as he cannot, in person attend all the sick who send for him, I assist him in his visitation: he takes care of the

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the great, and I of the plebeans."—"Very well (replied Fabricius) he leaves the blood of the commonality to thee, while he reſerves that of the gentry to himſelf; I congratulate thee upon thy ſhare; for it is better to have to do with the populace than with perſons of faſhion: happy is a ſuburb phyſician! his faults are leſs obſerved, and his aſſaſſinations leſs known. Yes, my child (added he) thy ſituation is to be envied, and to ſpeak in the words of Alexander, if I was not Fabricius, I could wiſh to be Gil Blas."

To ſhow the ſon of barber Nunnez, that he had reaſon to praiſe the happineſs of my preſent condition, I produced the rials which I had received from the Alguazil and paſtry-cook; upon which we went into a publick houſe in order to ſpend ſome of them: here we were ſerved with pretty good wine, which the longing deſire I had of taſting that liquor, making me think ſtill better than it was, I drank huge draughts of it, and (no diſparagement to the Roman Oracle) the more I filled my ſtomach, the leſs did that organ complain of the injury it received. Fabricius and I having ſtaid together a long time in the public-houſe, and laughed heartily at the expence of our maſters, as the cuſtom is among ſervants, we parted in the twilight, after having made a mutual promiſe of meeting again in the ſame place, next day in the afternoon.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VI.

Gil Blas continues to act the phyſician with equal capacity and ſucceſs.—The adventure of the ring retrieved.

I Had juſt got home when Doctor Sangrado came in, to whom I gave an account of the patients I had viſited, and put into his hand eight rials which remained of the twelve I had received for my preſcriptions, "Eight "rials! (ſaid he, after having counted them) "this is a ſmall matter for two viſits; but we "muſt refuſe nothing." So it appeared: for he kept ſix, and gave me two, "Hold Gil "Blas, (added he) there is ſomething for thee "to begin ſtock: I allow thee a fourth part "of what thou ſhalt get, and thou wilt be "rich in a very ſhort time (my friend) for, "pleaſe God, there will be plenty of diſeaſes "this ſeaſon."

I had reaſon to be contented with my ſhare; becauſe, reſolving to detain always a third part of what I ſhould receive from the patients, and afterwards touching a forth of what ſhould remain, it would on the whole (if there be any truth in arithmetic) amount to one half of what I ſhould earn. This conſideration inſpiring me with new ardour for my profeſſion, next day when I had dined, I reſumed my phyſical dreſs, and going out, viſited ſeveral patients whom I had regiſtered, and whom I treated after the ſame manner, though their diſtempers were

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were quite different. Hitherto things had gone ſmoothly on, and nobody (thank heaven) found fault with my preſcriptions; but however excellent the practiſe of phyſic may be, it cannot eſcape cenſure. Going into the houſe of a grocer whoſe ſon was dropſical, I there met with a little ſwarthy phyſician called Doctor Cuchillo, whom a relation of the grocer's had brought along with him: I made profound bows to every body preſent, and in particular, to the perſon who (I concluded) was called to conſult with me about the diſtemper of the patient; he ſaluted me with great gravity, then eying me attentively for ſome minutes, "Signor Doctor (ſaid he) pray excuſe my curioſity: I thought I had been acquainted with all my brethren the phyſicians of Valladolid: but I confeſs your features are utterly unknown to me: ſure you muſt not have been long ſettled in this city." I anſwered that I was a young practitioner, who as yet only preſcribed under the auſpices of Doctor Sangrado. "I congratulate you (ſaid he, bowing) on your having embraced the method of ſuch a great man; and I do not doubt that you are already maſter of your buſineſs, notwithſtanding your youthful appearance." He ſpoke this ſo naturally, that I did not know whether he was in jeſt or earneſt, and I was thinking upon ſome anſwer, when the grocer interpoſing, ſaid, "Gentlemem, I am perſuaded that you are both perfectly well acquainted with the art of phyſic, therefore, pray

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pray examine the ſituation of my ſon, and preſcribe what you ſhall judge proper for his cure."

Accordingly, the little doctor enquired into the ſtate of our patient, and after having made me obſerve all the ſymptoms of the diſeaſe, aſked in what manner I propoſed to treat him. "I am of opinion (ſaid I) that he ſhould be blooded every day, and drink hot water in abundance." At theſe words the little phyſician ſaid with a ſatirical grin, "And do you think theſe remedies will ſave his life?" Never doubt that (cried I, in a reſolute tone) they muſt certainly produce that effect, being (as Doctor Sangrado obſerves) ſpecifics againſt all kinds of diſtempers. "At that rate (replied he) Celſus is very much to blame, in aſſuring us, that for the more eaſy cure of a dropſy, it is requiſite to make the patient ſuffer both hunger and thirſt."—"Oh Celſus, I reſumed, is not my oracle: he was as liable to miſtakes as any other; and I have ſometimes found my account in acting quite contrary to his opinion."—"I perceive by your diſcourſe (ſaid Cuchillo) the ſure and ſatisfactory method that Doctor Sangrado would inſinuate into young practitioners: the whole of his practiſe conſiſts in bleeding and aqueous draughts; therefore I am not at all ſurpriſed to ſee ſo many honeſt people die under his hands."—"None of your invectives. (ſaid I, interrupting him with ſome heat) it does not look well to hear a man of your profeſſion caſt ſuch reflections. Come, come, Mr. Doctor,

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Doctor, abundance of ſick people are ſent to the other world without being blooded, or drinking hot water; and I don't doubt that you have diſmiſſed your ſhare of them: if you have any thing to ſay againſt Doctor Sangrado, commit it to paper, he will anſwer it, and we ſhall ſoon ſee on which ſide the laughers are."—"By St. Jago and St. Denis! (cried he in a rage) you are little acquainted with Doctor Cuchillo! Know, friend, that I have both teeth and nails, and am not at all afraid of Sangrado, who, in ſpite of his vanity and preſumption is a downright ninny." The appearance of the little doctor making me deſpiſe his wrath, I replied with great bitterneſs; he anſwered in the ſame manner, and we came to fifty cuffs in a very ſhort time: ſome blows paſſed, and each of us loſt an handful of hair, before the grocer and his kinſman could part us; which when they had accompliſhed, I was paid for my viſit and diſmiſſed, while they retained my antagoniſt, who ſeemed to them the more ſkilful of the two.

After this adventure, I had like to have met with another as bad: for going to viſit a fat chanter who was ill of a fever, I no ſooner mentioned hot water, than he fell into a rage againſt the ſpecific, curſed and ſwore, called me a thouſand names, and even threatened to throw me out of the window. I moved off faſter than I came in, and not chooſing to ſee any more patients that day, betook myſelf to the

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the houſe appointed for the rendezvous between me and Fabricius, who was already there: and as we found ourſelves in a frolickſome humour, we drank hard, and went home in a ſtate of elevation—that is, half ſeas over.

Signor Sangrado did not obſerve that I was drunk, becauſe he miſtook my extravagant geſtures in recounting the quarrel I had with the little doctor, for an effect of the emotion occaſioned by the battle: beſides, having been principally concerned in our diſpute, he became a party, and piqued at Cuchillo, ſaid, "Thou haſt done well, Gil Blas, in defending the honour of our remedies againſt that little abortion of the faculty. He affirms then, that aqueous draughts are improper for the dropſy! Ignorant wretch! I maintain—I do—that a dropſical patient cannot drink too much. Yes, water (added he) can cure all kinds of dropſies, as well as rheumatiſms, and the green-ſickneſs; it is moreover excellent in fevers where the patient burns and ſhivers at the ſame time: and of incredible effect even in thoſe diſtempers that are imputed to cold, ſerous, and phlegmatic humours: this opinion may appear ſtrange to ſuch raw phyſicians as Cuchillo; but it is eaſily ſupported by theory and practiſe, and if ſuch as he were capable of reaſoning philoſophically, inſtead of decrying my method, they would become my moſt zealous partizans."

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He did not therefore ſuſpect my being fuddled, ſo much was he enraged; for, in order to inflame him the more againſt the little doctor, I had thrown into my ſtory ſome circumſtances of my own invention. Nevertheleſs, fired as he was with what I had told him, he perceived that I drank more water that evening than uſual, the wine having made me very thirſty. Any other than Sangrado would have ſuſpected my extraordinary drought, and the great draughts I ſwallowed; but he firmly believed that I began to reliſh watery potions; and ſaid, with a ſmile, "I ſee, "Gil Blas, thou haſt no longer an averſion to "water. Heaven be praiſed, thou drinkeſt "it now like nectar. A change that does "not ſurpriſe me at all, my friend; for I "knew that it would ſoon grow familiar to "thy taſte."—"Sir (I replied) there is a "time for all things: I would not at preſent "give a pint of water for an hogſhead of "wine." The doctor, charmed with this anſwer, did not neglect ſuch a fair opportunity of extolling the excellence of water; but uttered a new eulogium on it, not like a cold advocate, but with all the fervour of an enthuſiaſt. "A thouſand times (cried he) a "thouſand and ten thouſand times more va-"luable and innocent than the taverns of our "days were thoſe baths of ages paſt, into "which people did not go to proſtitute in a "ſhameful manner their lives and fortunes "by glutting themſelves with wine; but

"where

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" where people met for amuſement, and drank
" hot water with honour and ſecurity! One
" cannot enough admire the wiſe proviſion of
" thoſe maſters of civil life, who eſtabliſhed
" publick places where water was freely given
" to all comers, and who ſecured the wine
" in the ſhops of apothecaries, permitting it
" to be uſed by the preſcriptions of phyſici-
" ans only. What ſurpriſing ſagacity! It is
" doubtleſs (added he) owing to ſome lucky
" remains of that ancient frugality, worthy
" of the golden age, that there are ſtill a few
" who, like thou and I, drink nothing but
" water; and, who as a preſervative from,
" or cure of all diſtempers, truſt to hot wa-
" ter unboiled: for I have obſerved that boil-
" ed water is more heavy and leſs agreeable
" to the ſtomach."

While he uttered this eloquent harangue, I had like to have laughed in his face more than once: I kept my gravity however. I did more.—I entered into the doctor's ſentiments, inveighed againſt the uſe of wine, and lamented that mankind had contracted a taſte for ſuch a pernicious liquor. Then (as my thirſt was not ſufficiently quenched) I filled a large goblet with water, and having ſwallowed long draughts of it, " Come, Sir (ſaid I to my " maſter) let us regale ourſelves with this " benevolent liquor, and revive in your houſe " thoſe ancient baths which you regret ſo " much." He applauded my zeal, and during a whole quarter of an hour, exhorted me to drink

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drink nothing but water, in order to familiarize myſelf to this preſcription, I promiſed to ſwallow a great quantity every evening; and that I might the more eaſily perform my promiſe went to bed with a reſolution of going to the tavern every day.

The oppoſition I met with at the grocer's houſe, did not deter me from preſcribing warm water and bleeding, next day. As I came out of a houſe where I had been to viſit a frantic poet, I met an old woman in the ſtreet, who accoſting me, aſked, if I was a phyſician; when I anſwered in the affirmative, "Well then (ſaid ſhe) I moſt humbly beg you will come along with me; my niece was yeſterday taken ill, and I don't know what is the matter with her." I followed the old gentlewoman, who conducted me to a houſe, and introduced me to a pretty neat chamber, where I found a perſon in bed, and going towards her, in order to enquire into the ſymptoms of her diſeaſe, was immediately ſtruck with her features, which when I had obſerved ſome minutes, I recollected her to be no other than the female adventurer who had ſo dextrouſly acted the part of Camilla. As for her part, ſhe did not ſeem to remember me; whether, the oppreſſion of her own diſtemper, or my phyſical garb, ſecured me from her recollection—Laying hold of her arm, in order to feel the pulſe, I perceived the ring upon her finger; at ſight of which I felt a terrible emotion, and a violent deſire of attempting

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to retrieve it: but conſidering that the woman might fall a crying, and Don Raphael, or ſome other champion of the fair ſex, come to their aſſiſtance, I was at pains to reſiſt the temptation, and imagining it would be better to diſſemble, and take the advice of Fabricius, ſtuck to this laſt reſolution. In the mean time the old woman preſſing me to let her know the nature of her niece's diſtemper, I was not fool enough to own myſelf ignorant of the matter; but, on the contrary, affecting the man of ſkill, and copying my maſter's deportment, I told her, with great gravity, that the diſtemper proceeded from the patient's want of perſpiration, and that, of conſequence, ſhe muſt be ſpeedily blooded, that evacuation being the only ſubſtitute of perſpiration: I likewiſe preſcribed warm water, that the rules of our practiſe might be exactly obſerved.

Having made my viſit as ſhort as poſſible, I ran to find the ſon of Nunnez, whom I met at the door, going out to execute a commiſſion for his maſter: I told him my new adventure, aſking, if he thought I ſhould cauſe Camilla to be arreſted in courſe of law? He anſwered, "Not at all. That is not the way to ſee thy ring again; for the officers of juſtice hate to make reſtitution. Remember the jail of Aſtorga, where thy horſe, money, and even thy clothes were detained by theſe harpies. We muſt rather make uſe of our own induſtry, in recovering thy jewell: I'll undertake to find out ſome ſtratagem for that purpoſe,

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poſe, and I will think of it in my way to the hoſpital, where I carry a ſhort meſſage to the ſteward, from my maſter: go and wait for me at our tavern, and be not impatient, for I will be with thee in a very little time."

He did not, however, arrive at the rendezvous, till after I had been there three hours; and then ſo diſguiſed, that at firſt I did not know him: for he changed his dreſs, twiſted his hair into a queue, covered one half of his face with a pair of artificial whiſkers, provided himſelf with a huge ſword, the hilt of which was at leaſt three feet in cicumference; and marched at the head of five men who looked as fierce as himſelf, and wore alſo long rapiers and thick muſtachios. "Your ſervant, Signor Gil Blas (ſaid he, accoſting me) you ſee in me an alguazil of a new ſtamp, and in theſe brave fellows who accompany me, ſoldiers of the ſame model. Show us only the houſe of the woman who ſtole your diamond, and be aſſured that we will make her reſtore it in a twinkling." I embraced Fabricius at this diſcourſe, which explained the ſtratagem he intended to put in practiſe in my behalf; and aſſured him that I very much approved of his expedient. I ſaluted alſo the falſe ſoldiers, who were three vallets, and two journeymen barbers of his acquaintance, whom he had engaged to act this part. Having treated the whole brigade with wine, we went all together, in the twilight, to Camilla's lodgings, and knocked at the door, which the old

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woman opening, and taking my attendants for the terriers of juſtice who never entered that houſe without cauſe, was ſeized with conſternation. "Courage, good mother (ſaid Fabricius to her) we are come hither only on account of a ſmall affair that will ſoon be determined." So ſaying, we advanced to the chamber of the ſick perſon, conducted by the old woman, who walked before, lighting us with a wax taper in a ſilver candleſtick. Taking the candle in my hand, I went towards the bed, and diſcovering my face to Camilla, "Perfidious woman! (ſaid I) behold the too credulous Gil Blas, whom you have tricked, Ah wretch! I have found you at laſt, and the corregidor, in conſequence of my information, has ordered this alguazil to apprehend you. Come, Mr. Tipſtaff (ſaid I to Fabricius) do your office."—"There is no occaſion (anſwered he, raiſing his voice) for exhorting me to do my duty. I remember that there creature, who has been a long time marked in my memorandum-book, with red letters. Riſe, my princeſs (added he) dreſs yourſelf with all diſpatch. I intend to be your uſher, and conduct you to the city jail, if you think well of it."

At theſe words, Camilla, ſick as ſhe was, perceiving that two of his followers, with the great wiſkers, were about to drag her out by force, ſat up in her bed, claſped her hands in a ſuppliant poſture, and looking at me with terror in her eyes; "Signor Gil Blas (ſaid ſhe)

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ſhe) I conjure you by the chaſte mother who bore you, to have pity upon me! though I am very guilty, I am ſtill more unfortunate! don't ruin me! I will reſtore your ring." So ſaying, ſhe took it off from her finger, and put it into my hand. But I told her, my diamond alone would not ſuffice: and that ſhe muſt, beſides, make reſtitution of the thouſand ducats which had been ſtolen from me in the furniſhed lodging. "Oh Signor! (ſhe replied) do not aſk your ducats of me; the traitor Don Raphael, whom I have not ſeen ſince that time, carried them off the ſame night."—"Oho, my little darling (ſaid Fabricius to her) you think to get out of the ſcrape, by denying you had any ſhare of the booty? but you ſhan't be ſo eaſily quit, I aſſure you: your being an accomplice of Don Raphael is a ſufficient reaſon for obliging you to give an account of your paſt life. You have, doubtleſs, a great many things on your conſcience, and therefore you ſhall go to priſon, if you pleaſe, and make a general confeſſion. I will carry this old gentlewoman thither alſo (added he) for I imagine ſhe knows a great many curious ſtories which the corregidor will not be ſorry to hear."

At theſe words the two women put every thing in practiſe to melt us, filling the chamber with cries, groans, and lamentations: while the old woman on her knees, ſometimes before the alguazil, and ſometimes before his attendants, endeavoured to move their compaſſion;

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Camilla implored me in the moſt affecting manner, to ſave her from the hands of juſtice. Upon which I pretended to relent, ſaying to the ſon of Nunnez, Mr. Officer, ſince I have got my diamond, I am ſatisfied. I don't deſire to give this poor woman any further trouble; and would not even ſeek the death of a ſinner. "For ſhame (ſaid he) a man of your humanity would make a bad trooper: but I muſt acquit myſelf of my commiſſion, by which I am expreſsly ordered to apprehend theſe infantas: for the corregidor wants to make an example of them." For heaven's ſake! (I replied) have ſome regard to intreaty, and abate a little of your ſeverity, in conſideration of the preſent which theſe ladies will offer. "Oh! that's another affair (ſaid he); that is what we call a figure of rhetoric well placed—Come, let us ſee what they have got to give me."—"I have (ſaid Camilla) a pearl-necklace and ear-rings of a conſiderable value." Here ſhe was interrupted with. "Yes, "but if they come from the Philippine iſles "I'll have none of them."—"You may take "them, upon my word, I'll warrant them "genuine," (ſaid ſhe); at the ſame time deſiring the old woman to bring a little box, out of which ſhe took the necklace and ear-rings, and put them into the alguazil's hand. Though he knew no more of jewels than I did, he was perſuaded that the diamonds of the ear-rings were genuine, as well as the pearls of the necklace; therefore having examined them

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them attentively, "Theſe jewels (ſaid he) ſeem "to be of good water, and provided the "ſilver candleſtick, which Signor Gil Blas "has in his hand, be added to them, I won't "anſwer for my fidelity." I don't believe (ſaid I to Camilla) that you will for a trifle, break off a treaty ſo much to your advantage. So ſaying I gave the light to the old woman, and the candleſtick to Fabricius, who being ſatisfied with what he had got, becauſe (perhaps) he ſaw nothing elſe in the room which he could eaſily carry off, ſaid to the ladies, "Adieu, my princeſſes; live in peace. I will "ſpeak to the corregidor, and repreſent you "whiter than ſnow: for ſuch as we can give "what turn we pleaſe to things, and never "tell him the plain truth, except when we "are under no temptation to lie."

CHAP. V.

The ſequel of the ring retrieved. Gil Blas quits the profeſſion of phyſic, and makes his retreat from Valladolid.

AFTER having in this manner executed the ſcheme of Fabricius, we left Camilla's lodgings, congratulating ourſelves upon a piece of ſucceſs that even ſurpaſſed our expectation; for we had laid our account with recovering the ring only. However, we carried off the reſt without ceremony; and, far from making a ſcruple of robbing courtezans, we thought we had done a meritorious action.

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—" Gentlemen, ſaid Fabricius (when he had " got into the ſtreet) it is my opinion that " we ſhould go back to the tavern, and ſpend " the night in making merry. To-morrow " we will ſell the candleſtick, necklace, and " ear-rings, and ſhare the money like bro- " thers; after which we will return to our " ſeveral homes, and make the beſt excuſe we " can to our maſters." This propoſal of the alguazil ſeemed very reaſonable to us all: we returned to the tavern, ſome of us believing we could eaſily find an excuſe for having lain abroad, and others not caring whether they ſhould be diſmiſſed or no.

We ordered a good ſupper, and ſat down to table with as much appetite as good humour. The repaſt was ſeaſoned with a thouſand agreeable ſallies; and Fabricius, in particular, enlivened the converſation, and diverted us all extremely, by innumerable ſtrokes replete with Caſtilian ſalt, which is equal at leaſt to the ancient Attic.—But while we were in this joyful diſpoſition, our mirth was all of a ſudden overcaſt by an unforeſeen accident. A man of a pretty good mein entered the room where we were at ſupper, followed by two others of terrible aſpect; after theſe three more appeared; and we counted no leſs than twelve who came in thus, three by three, armed with carabines, ſwords, and bayonets. —We ſoon perceived them to be the ſoldiers of the patrole, and it was not difficult to gueſs their intention; wherefore we had ſome thoughts,

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thoughts at firſt of making reſiſtance; but they ſurrounded us in an inſtant, and kept us in awe, as well by their numbers as their fire-arms.—" Gentlemen (ſaid their commander " to us with a ſneer) I know by what ingeni- " ous artifice you have recovered a ring from " the hands of a certain ſhe-adventurer; and, " to be ſure the contrivance is excellent, and " richly deſerves a publick recompence, which " you ſhall by no means miſs.—Juſtice has " already appointed an apartment for you in " her own houſe, and will not fail to reward " ſuch a maſterly attempt." This diſcourſe very much diſconcerted all thoſe to whom it was addreſſed: our countenances changed, and we felt, in our turn, the ſame fear with which we had inſpired Camilla. Fabricius, however, though pale and diſmayed, endeavoured to juſtify what we had done. " Sir (ſaid he) as we " had no bad intention, this little trick might " be forgiven."—" How the devil! (cried " the commandant in a rage) do you call this " a little trick? Don't you know that it is a " hanging matter? For, beſides that no man " is allowed to do Juſtice himſelf without " the cognizance of the law, you have carried " off a candleſtick, necklace, and ear-rings " that did not belong to you; and which is " ſtill worſe, in order to commit that rob- " bery, you have diſguiſed yourſelves like " tipſtaves.—Wretches! to dreſs yourſelves " in the habit of ſuch honourable people to " do miſchief. I ſhall think you very lucky,

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" if you are only ſentenced to the gallies." When he had convinced us that the affair was much more ſerious than we at firſt imagined, we fell down together at his feet, and begged he would have pity on our youth. But our prayers were unregarded; and beſides, he rejected a propoſal we made of quitting to him the necklace, ear-rings, and candleſtick; even my ring was refuſed, becauſe I ſuppoſe it was offered before too much company.—In ſhort, he was quite inexorable; ordered my companions to be diſarmed, and carried us all together to the public jail. In our way thither one of the guard told me, that the old woman who lived with Camilla, ſuſpecting that we were not the real foot-pads of juſtice, had followed us to the tavern; and there being confirmed in her opinion, had revenged herſelf upon us, by informing the patrole of the whole affair.

We were immediately plundered of every thing; the necklace, diamonds, and candleſtick ſeized; as alſo my ring, together with the ruby of the Philippine iſles, which I had unfortunately in my pocket. They did not even ſpare the rials which I had that day received for my preſcriptions; which was a ſure ſign to me that the people belonging to juſtice at Valladolid are as expert in their office as thoſe at Aſtorga, and that the manners of all theſe gentlemen are every where alike. While I was rifled of my jewels and caſh, the officer of the patrole recounted our adventure to theſe agents of the plunder; and the affair ſeemed to

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to them of ſuch a ſerious nature, that the majority thought we deſerved a halter: but others leſs ſevere imagined we might get off for two hundred laſhes each, and a few years ſervice in the gallies.—Until the corregidor ſhould think proper to decide our affair, we were locked up in a dungeon, where we lay upon ſtraw, with which it was ſtrewed like a ſtable littered for horſes.—Here we might have remained long enough, and at laſt exchanged our habitation for the gallies, had not Signor Manuel Ordonnez next day heard of our misfortune, and reſolved to procure the liberty of Fabricius, which he could not do without obtaining alſo the diſmiſſion of us all. Being a man very much eſteemed in the city, he did not ſpare ſolicitations, and partly by his own credit, and partly by that of his friends, at the end of three days effected our enlargement. But we did not come out as we had gone in; the candleſtick, necklace, and ear-rings, my ring, ruby, and rials being detained: which made me remember thoſe verſes of Virgil, that begin with "*Sic vos non vobis.*"

As ſoon as we were ſet at liberty we returned to our maſters; and Doctor Sangrado received me very kindly, ſaying, "My poor "Gil Blas, I did not hear of thy misfortune "till this morning, and was juſt going to "make ſtrong ſolicitations in thy behalf. "Thou muſt conſole thyſelf my friend, for "this accident, and attach thyſelf more than "ever to phyſic."—"That is my deſign,

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(ſaid I)." And truly I thought of nothing elſe. Far from wanting buſineſs, it happened, as my maſter had foretold, that diſtempers were very rife, the ſmall pox and putrid fever beginning to ravage the city and ſuburbs; ſo that all the phyſicians in Valladolid, and we in particular, had abundance of practice.—Scarce a day paſſed in which we did not viſit eight or ten patients, each; from whence it may be eaſily conceived what a quantity of blood was ſpilt and water drank. But, I do not know how it happened, all our ſick died either on account of our mal-practice, or becauſe their diſeaſes were incurable.—Certain it is, we very ſeldom had occaſion to make three viſits to one patient: at the ſecond, we were either told that he was juſt going to be buried, or found him at the laſt gaſp; and as I was but a young phyſician, who had not yet time to be inured to murder, I began to be very uneaſy at the fatal events which might be laid to my charge.—"Sir (ſaid I, one evening to Dr. Sangrado) "I take heaven to witneſs that I follow your "method with the utmoſt exactneſs; yet, ne-"vertheleſs, every one of my patients leaves "me in the lurch. It looks as if they took a "pleaſure in dying, merely to bring our prac-"tice into diſcredit. This very day I met two "of them going to their long home."—"Why "truly, child (anſwered he) I have reaſon to "make pretty much the ſame obſervation: I "have not often the ſatisfaction of curing "thoſe who fall into my hands; and if I was

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" not so sure as I am of the principles on which " I proceed, I should think my remedies were " pernicious in almost all the cases that come " under my care."—" If you will take my " advice, Sir (said I) we will change our me- " thod, and give chemical preparations to our " patients, through curiosity; the worst that " can happen will only be, that they produce " the same effect that follows our bleedings " and warm water."—" I would willingly " make that experiment (he replied) provi- " ded it could have no bad consequence; but I " have published a book, in which I have ex- " tolled the use of frequent bleeding and aque- " ous draughts: and wouldst thou have me " go and decry my own work?"—" Oh! you " are certainly in the right (said I) you must " not give your enemies such a triumph over " you: they would say you are at last disa- " bused; and therefore ruin your reputation: " perish, rather the nobility, clergy, and peo- " ple! and let us continue in our old path. " After all, our brother doctors, notwith- " standing their aversion for bleeding, perform " as few miracles as we do; and I believe their " drugs are no better than our specifics."

We went to work, therefore, afresh, and proceeded in such a manner, that in less than six weeks we made more widows and orphans than the siege of Troy. By the number of burials, one would have thought that the plague was in Valladolid; and every day, some father came to our house to demand an ac-

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count of his ſon, whom we had raviſhed from him, or ſome uncle, to upbraid us with his nephew's death. As for the ſons and nephew's, whoſe father's and uncle's we had diſpatched, they never appeared to complain: the huſbands too were very civil, and never cavilled with us about the loſs of their wives. But thoſe afflicted people, whoſe reproaches we were obliged to undergo, were ſometimes, very brutal in their grief, and called us ignorant aſſaſſins. As they did not ſpare me, in particular, I was afflicted by their epithets: but my maſter, who was uſed to ſuch accidents, heard them without the leaſt emotion. I might, perhaps, in time, have been accuſtomed to reproach, as well as he, if heaven, doubtleſs to rid the ſick people in Valladolid of one of their moſt ſevere ſcourges, had not produced an occaſion that gave me a diſguſt to phyſic, which I practiſed with ſo little ſucceſs.

There was in our neighbourhood a tennis-court, to which the idle people in town daily reſorted, and, among the reſt, one of your profeſſed bullies, who take upon themſelves the office of arbiters, and decide all differences that happen. He was from Biſcay, his name Don Rodrigo de Mondragon, about thirty years of age, of an ordinary make, but lean and muſcular; he had two little twinkling eyes, that rolled in his head, and threatened every body he looked at; a very flat noſe, placed between red wiſkers, that curled up to

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to his very temples. and a manner of ſpeaking ſo rough and paſſionate, that his words ſtruck terror into every body. This racket breaker had made himſelf tyrant of the tennis-court, where he judged all the diſputes that happened among thoſe who played, in the moſt imperious manner, and no man durſt appeal from his deciſion, unleſs he could reſolve to fight him next day. Such as I have deſcribed Don Rodrigo, who, notwithſtanding the Don he had prefixed to his name, was an arrant raſcal, he captivated the miſtreſs of the tennis-court, who was a woman about forty years of age, rich and agreeable enough, and in the fifteenth month of her widowhood. I know not how he won her heart; for doubtleſs it was not by his beauty; but ſurely, by that *je ne ſcai quoi* which cannot be expreſſed. Be that as it will, ſhe had a paſſion for him, and actually deſigned to take him for her huſband; but while preparations were making for the conſummation of that affair, ſhe fell ſick, and unhappily employed me as her phyſician. If her diſtemper had not been a malignant fever, my preſcriptions were ſufficient to endanger her life; ſo that in four days, I filled the tennis-court with mourning; the miſtreſs went the way of all my patients, and her relations took poſſeſſion of her eſtate. Don Rodrigo, made deſperate by the loſs of his miſtreſs, or rather by being baulked in his expectation of a very advantageous match, not only curſed and reviled me, but alſo ſwore, that he would run me

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me through the body whenever he could catch me, exterminate me from the face of the earth. A charitable neighbour informed me of this oath, and adviſed me not to ſtir abroad, for fear of meeting this devil of a man. This advice, which I had no intention to neglect, filled me with confuſion and diſmay: I fancied inceſſantly, that I ſaw this furious Biſcayan coming into the houſe; and could not enjoy one moment's repoſe. This effectually detached me from phyſic, and my ſole care was how to free myſelf from diſquiet: I reſumed my embroidered ſuit, and after having bid adieu to my maſter, who could not perſuade me to ſtay, quitted the city at day-break, not without apprehenſion of meeting Don Rodrigo in my way.

CHAP. VI.

Of his route when he left Valladolid; and the perſon he joined on his road.

I Walked very faſt, looking behind me from time to time, to ſee if this formidable Biſcayan was not at my heels; my imagination being ſo much poſſeſſed by that fellow, that I took every tree or buſh I ſaw for him; and every moment felt my heart throb with fear. I plucked up my courage however when I had got a good league, and continued at an eaſier pace my journey towards Madrid, whither my purpoſe was to go. I ſhould have quitted Valladolid without regret, had I not been

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been ſorry to part from Fabricius, my dear Pylades, to whom I could not ſo much as bid adieu: but it gave me no mortification to renounce phyſic: on the contrary I begged pardon of God, for having exerciſed it at all; though I did not fail to count, with pleaſure, the money I had in my purſe, notwithſtanding its being the ſalary of my aſſaſſinations: in that reſpect reſembling thoſe ladies of pleaſure, who reform their morals, but nevertheleſs, keep faſt hold of the wages of ſin. My whole fortune amounted to pretty near the value of five ducats, in rials; on the ſtrength of which I expected to reach Madrid, where I did not doubt of finding ſome good place: beſides, I longed paſſionately to ſee that auguſt city, which had been extolled to me as the epitome of all the wonders of the world.

While I recollected all that I had heard in its praiſe, and enjoyed its pleaſures by anticipation, I heard the voice of a man behind me, ſinging at full ſtretch: he had a leathern wallet on his back, a guitarre hanging about his neck, a long ſword by his ſide, and walked ſo faſt, that he was up with me in a very ſhort time. Being one of the two journeymen barbers, with whom I had been impriſoned in the adventure of the ring, we knew one another immediately, though our dreſs was altered, and were very much ſurprized at meeting ſo unexpectedly on the highway. I aſſured him that I was extremely glad to have him for a fellow-traveller, and his joy ſeemed no leſs at meeting with

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with me. I told him my reaſons for quitting Valladolid; and he repoſed the ſame confidence in me, by letting me know that he had quarrelled with his maſter, and bid him an eternal adieu. "If I had been inclined (added he) to live any longer in Valladolid, I "could have found employment in abundance "of ſhops; for, without vanity, I can handle a razor, and curl a muſtachio, as well "as e'er a barber in Spain, but I could no "longer reſiſt the violent deſire I had to viſit "the place of my nativity, from which I "have been abſent theſe ten years: I want to "breathe my own country air a little, and "know the ſituation of my family, with "whom I hope to be in two days; for they "live at a place called Olmedo, a market-"town on this ſide of Segovia."

Reſolving to accompany this barber to his own home, and from thence go to Segovia, in order to take the opportunity of ſome convenience to Madrid, we purſued our journey, and diſcourſed of indifferent ſubjects. He was a young fellow of ſome wit and humour: and when we had coverſed together an hour, he aſked how my ſtomach was diſpoſed: I anſwered, that he ſhould ſee at the firſt inn. Upon which he ſaid, "We had better make a "pauſe in the mean time: I have ſomething "for breakfaſt in my wallet; for when I tra-"vel, I always take care to have proviſion "along with me: I don't trouble myſelf with "clothes, linen, and other uſeleſs baggage; "but

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" but reſolving to have nothing ſuperfluous, " fill my knapſack with belly-timber, my ra- " zors, and a waſh-ball." I commended his prudence, and conſented, with all my heart, to the pauſe he propoſed: for I was hungry, and reſolved to make a good meal, which I could not but expect, after what he had told me. We turned a little out of the highway, in order to ſit upon the graſs, where my friend the barber took out his victuals, conſiſting of five or ſix onions, with a few cruſts of bread and cheeſe; but what he produced as the beſt furniture in his budget, was a little bottle full (as he ſaid) of delicate wine. Though our diſhes were not very ſavory, hunger, being very urgent to us both, made them reliſh pretty well; and we emptied the bottle, which contained about two pints of a ſort of wine that I don't chooſe to boaſt much of: after which we got up, and continued our journey with great good humour. The barber, who had been informed by Fabricius that I had met with ſome very particular adventures, deſired to hear them from my own mouth; a ſatisfaction I could not refuſe to a man who had regaled me ſo ſumptuouſly. When I had gratified his curioſity, I told him he could do no leſs, in return for my complaiſance, than recount the ſtory of his own life. " Oh! as " for my ſtory (cried he) it is not worth hear- " ing, as it contains nothing but ordinary " facts: nevertheleſs (added he) ſince we have " nothing elſe to do, you ſhall hear it, ſuch

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" as it is." So saying he related it, nearly in these words.

CHAP. VII.

The story of the journeyman barber.

FERDINAND Peres de la Fuenta, my grandfather (I go to the fountain-head) after having been fifty years barber in the village of Olmedo, died, and left four sons, the eldest of whom took possession of his shop, and succeeded him in the business; Bertrand, the second, having an inclination for trade, became a mercer; Thomas, who was the third, kept a school; and the fourth whose name was Pedro, feeling himself born for the belles lettres, sold a little lot of ground which he had for his patrimony, and went to live at Madrid, where he hoped one day, to distinguish himself by his wit and learning; while his three brothers did not separate, but settling at Olmedo, married the daughters of husbandmen, who, in lieu of fortune, brought them abundance of children, breeding as if it had been for a wager. My mother, the barber's wife, brought six into the world, for her share, in the first five years of her marriage, of which number I am one. My father taught me betimes to shave, and when I arrived at the age of fifteen put this wallet upon my shoulders, and girding me with a long sword, said, " Go, " Diego, thou art now in a condition to gain " a livelihood: go and see the world: thou " hast

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" haſt occaſion for a little travelling to rub " thee up, and make thee perfect in thy bu- " ſineſs. March, and don't return to Olme- " do before thou haſt made a tour of Spain. " Let me not hear from thee until this be " performed." At theſe words he embraced me very affectionately, and turned me out of doors.

Such was the behaviour of my father at parting with me. But my mother, whoſe manners were not quite ſo rough, ſeemed more affected on this occaſion: ſhe let fall ſome tears, and even ſlipped a ducat privately into my hand. So I quitted Olmedo, and took the road to Segovia; of which, however, I had not walked above two hundred paces, when I ſtopped to examine my knapſack, being deſirous of ſeeing what it contained, and of knowing preciſely the extent of my poſſeſſion. I found a caſe and two razors, ſo much wore, that they ſeemed to have ſhaved two generations, with a thong of leather to ſet them, and a lump of ſoap: beſides, there was a canvas ſhirt quite new, an old pair of my father's ſhoes, and what gave me more pleaſure than all the reſt, twenty rials wrapped in a linen rag. This was my whole fortune, by which you may conclude, that maſter Nicholas the barber relied a good deal on my ſkill, ſince he ſent me away ſo poorly provided. Nevertheleſs, the poſſeſſion of a ducat and twenty rials did not fail to charm a young fellow like me, who had never before been maſter of coin: I believed

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believed my funds were inexhauſtible, and continued my journey in a tranſport of joy, admiring, every moment, the hilt of my ſword, which thumped againſt my hams, or got between my legs, at every ſtep.

Arriving at the village of Ataquines, in the evening, very ſharp ſet, I went to lodge at an inn, and, as if I had been a man of fortune, called for ſupper, with an air of authority: the landlord having ſurveyed me ſome time, and ſeeing who he had to do with, ſaid, in a very obliging manner, "Maſter, "you ſhall be ſatisfied; we will treat you like "a prince." So ſaying, he ſhowed me into a little room; where, in a quarter of an hour, they brought me a ragout made of ram cat, which I eat as greedily as if it had been compoſed of a rabbit or hare. This excellent diſh was accompanied with wine, ſo good, as he ſaid, that the king himſelf could not drink better. Notwithſtanding this eulogium, I perceived it was curſedly ſour; but this did not hinder me from doing as much honour to it, as I had already done to the ragout: and, to complete the treatment of a prince, I was conducted to a couch, more proper for encouraging watchfulneſs than ſleep; being a truckle-bed, ſo narrow and ſhort, that, little as I was, I had no room to lie in it with my legs extended: beſides, inſtead of a mattraſs and feather-bed, it had only a wretched flock-bed, covered with a doubled ſheet, which had ſerved an hundred different travellers at leaſt,

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ſince the laſt waſhing. Nevertheleſs, in ſuch a convenience, my ſtomach full of ragout, and that delicious wine which the landlord had recommended, thanks to my youth and conſtitution, I enjoyed a ſound ſleep, and ſpent the night without indigeſtion.

Next day, after having breakfaſted, and paid ſauce for my good cheer, I made but one ſtage to Segovia; and, on my firſt arrival, had the good fortune to be employed in a ſhop for my board and lodging: here, however, I ſtayed but ſix months; being ſeduced by a brother journeyman of my acquaintance, who longed to ſee Madrid: and with whom I ſet out for that city. There I got a place on the ſame terms as at Segovia, in a well accuſtomed ſhop, much frequented on account of the neighbourhood of the church of Santa Cruz, and the prince's theatre: my maſter, two journeymen, and I, being ſcarce ſufficient to trim all our cuſtomers, who conſiſted of people of all ranks, and, among others of players and authors. One day, two perſons of the laſt profeſſion, being there together, began to diſcourſe about the poetry and poets of the time, and hearing them mention the name of my uncle, I liſtened to their converſation with great attention. "Don Juan de Zavaleta (ſaid one of them) is an author, in my "opinion, beneath the public notice: a cold "genius, a man without fancy: his laſt piece "has done him infinite prejudice." "And pray "(ſaid the other) has ever Lewis Valez de "Guevara

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" Guevara produced a good work? Was ever " any thing more wretched than his perfor- " mances?" They named a great many more poets, whom I have forgot. I remember only, that they ſpoke contemptuouſly of them all, except my uncle, of whom they made honourable mention, agreeing that he was a lad of merit. " Yes (ſaid one of them) " Don Pedro de la Fuenta is an excellent " writer: his books contain a delicate raillery " mixed with erudition, which makes them " agreeably ſatirical; and I am not at all ſur- " prized at his being eſteemed by the court " and city, or at his receiving ſalaries from " ſeveral grandees."—" He has, indeed (ſaid " the other) enjoyed a pretty large income " theſe many years; and as he lives with the " Duke of Medina Celi, and ſpends little, " muſt be worth a conſiderable ſum of mo- " ney."

I did not loſe one word which the poet ſaid concerning my uncle, who, we had heard in the family, made a noiſe in Madrid, by his works, ſome people travelling through Olmedo having told us ſo; but as he neglected to let us hear from him, and ſeemed quite detached from his relations, we, on our part, lived with as great indifference towards him. True blood is, however, always guided by a ſure inſtinct: as ſoon as I heard that he was in good circumſtances, and knew where he lodged, I was tempted to wait upon him: though one thing embarraſſed me not a little; his

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his being called Don Pedro by the authors. That Don gave ſome uneaſineſs, and I was afraid he might be ſome other poet than my uncle. I was not, however, ſtopped by this conſideration; but imagined that he might have been ennobled on account of his wit, and therefore reſolved to go and ſee him. For this purpoſe, with my maſter's permiſſion, I dreſſed myſelf one morning, as well as I could, and went out of the ſhop, not a little proud of being nephew to a man who had acquired ſuch reputation by his genius. As the barbers are not the leaſt vain people in the world, I began to conceive a great opinion of myſelf, and, ſtrutting with an haughty air, enquired for the houſe of the Duke de Medina Celi, where, preſenting myſelf at the gate, and ſaying, I wanted to ſpeak with Don Pedro de la Fuenta, the porter pointed with his finger to a little ſtair-caſe, at the further end of a court, which he bid me aſcend, and knock at the firſt door on my right hand: I did ſo, and (a young man coming out) aſked if Signor Don Pedro de la Fuenta lodged there. "Yes "(ſaid he) but you cannot ſee him at pre- "ſent."—"I ſhould be very glad (I replied) "to ſpeak with him; for I bring him news "of his family."—"If you could bring him "news of the pope (ſaid he) I would not "introduce you to his chamber juſt now; "for he is compoſing; and when that is the "caſe, we muſt take care not to diſturb his "imagination: he will not be viſible till noon,

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" ſo that you may go and take a turn, and " come back about that time.

I took his advice, and walked through the city the whole morning, thinking continually on the reception I ſhould meet with from my uncle, who I imagination would be extremely glad to ſee me: I judged of his ſentiments by my own, and preparing myſelf for a very tender ſcene, returned to his lodgings, with all diligence at the hour preſcribed. " You are " come in the very nick of time (ſaid his " valet) for my maſter is juſt going out; " ſtay here a minute, and I will let him know " you are come." So ſaying, he left me in an outward room, and returning in a moment conducted me into the chamber of his maſter, whoſe face had ſo much of our family air in it, that I was ſtruck with the reſemblance, and could not help thinking it was my very uncle Thomas whom I had left at home. Having ſaluted him with profound reſpect, I told him I was the ſon of maſter Nicolas de la Fuenta, barber in Olmedo, that I had worked at my father's buſineſs theſe three weeks at Madrid, in quality of a journeyman; and that I intended to make the tour of Spain for my improvement. While I ſpoke, my uncle ſeemed to muſe, conſidering, in all likelihood, whether he ſhould diſown me for his nephew, or get rid of me in a more dexterous manner. He choſe this laſt method, and, affecting a ſmiling air, ſaid, " Well, my " friend, how do thy father and uncles? I " hope

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" hope they are in good circumſtances." Upon this, I began to deſcribe the plentiful propagation of our family; I told him the names of all the children, male and female, and even comprehended in that liſt their godfathers and godmothers. He did not ſeem to intereſt himſelf infinitely in my detail, but coming to his purpoſe, replied, " Diego, I approve very " much of thy reſolution to travel, in order " to make thee perfect in thy profeſſion; and " I adviſe thee to leave Madrid as ſoon as " poſſible: it is a pernicious place for youth, " in which thou wilt be ruined, my child: " It will be more for thy advantage to reſide " in ſome of the other cities of the kingdom, " where people's morals are not ſo much cor- " rupted. Go (added he) and, when thou " art ready to ſet out, come and ſee me again; " I will give thee a piſtole to help thee to " make the tour of Spain." With theſe words, he puſhed me gently out of his chamber, and ſent me about my buſineſs.

I had not ſenſe enough to perceive that he wanted to remove me at a good diſtance from him; but going to our ſhop, gave my maſter an account of what had paſſed; he was as far from diſcovering the intention of Signor Don Pedro as I was, and ſaid, " I am not at all of " your uncle's opinion: inſtead of adviſing " you to travel, he ought rather, I think, " to make it your intereſt to ſtay in this city; " for, being intimate with ſo many perſons " of quality, he can eaſily ſettle you in ſome

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" great family, and put you in a condition to " make your fortune." Struck with this diſcourſe, which flattered my imagination, in two days I went back to my uncle, and propoſed, that he ſhould employ his credit to procure admiſſion for me into the family of ſome lord belonging to the court. But this propoſal was not at all to his liking: a vain man like him, who had free acceſs to the great, and eat every day at their tables, could not brook his nephew's ſitting with the ſervants, while he dined with their lords; in this caſe, little Diego would have made Signor Don Pedro bluſh. He did not fail, therefore to refuſe my requeſt, and that not in the moſt civil manner. " How! you little " vagabond (ſaid he with a furious look) " wouldſt thou quit thy profeſſion? Go, I " abandon thee to thoſe who have given thee " ſuch pernicious council: get out of my apart- " ment, and never ſet foot in it again, other- " wiſe I will cauſe thee to be chaſtiſed as thou " deſerveſt." Confounded at theſe words, and ſtill more at the tone in which they were delivered, I retired, with the tear in my eye, very much affected at this harſh behaviour: but as I was naturally briſk and haughty, I ſoon dried my tears; my grief changed to indignation, and I reſolved to take no further notice of this unkind relation, without whoſe aſſiſtance I had hitherto made ſhift to live.

My

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My whole thought being now bent on cultivating my talent, I applied to buſineſs, ſhaved all day long, and in the evening learned to play on the guitarre, by way of recreation. My maſter for that inſtrument was an old Signor Eſcudero*, whoſe beard I trimmed, and who taught me muſick, which he underſtood perfectly well, having been formerly choriſter in a cathedral. His name was Marcos de Obregon, a ſage perſon, who had a large ſtock of ſenſe, as well as experience, and loved me as well as if I had been his own child. He ſerved in quality of uſher to a phyſician's wife, who lived within thirty paces of our houſe, whither I uſed to go in the twilight, when we had left off working: and ſitting together, on the threſhold of the door, we uſed to make a little concert, not at all diſagreeable to the neighbours: not that our voices were exquiſite, but while we thrummed upon the inſtrument, each of us, in our turn, accompanied it with ſinging, and that was ſufficient to pleaſe our audience. In particular, we diverted Donna Mergellina, the phyſician's wife, who uſed to come into the paſſage to hear us, and ſometimes made us repeat the airs that were moſt to her liking; her huſband not being offended at her enjoying this diverſion; for though he was a Spaniard, and already well ſtricken in years, he was not jealous: his profeſſion engroſſed him wholly,

* Eſcudero: a ſquire to wait on a gentlewoman.

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and as he returned fatigued from his patients in the evening, he went to bed betimes, without being alarmed at his wife's attention to our concerts: 'tis probable, indeed, that he did not think them capable of making dangerous impreſſions: and we muſt obſerve, that he imagined he had little or no cauſe to fear; Mergellina being young and handſome, 'tis true, but withal ſo ſavagely virtuous, that ſhe could not ſo much as endure the look of a man. He did not, therefore, begrudge her a paſtime that ſeemed ſo innocent and honourable, but left us to ſing as much as we pleaſed. One evening when I came to the phyſician's door, with an intention to play as uſual, I found the old ſquire expecting me, who taking me by the hand, ſaid he wanted to take a turn with me before we ſhould begin our concert; then leading me into a by-ſtreet. where we found we could talk with freedom, "Son Diego (ſaid he, with a melancholy "air) I have ſomething extraordinary to diſ-"cloſe: I am afraid my child that we both "ſhall have cauſe to repent of amuſing our-"ſelves in the evening, with concerts at my "maſter's door. I have, doubtleſs, a great "friendſhip for you, and am very well pleaſed "with having taught you to play upon the "guitarre, and ſing; but had I foreſeen the "misfortune that threatens us, pleaſe God! "I would have given you your leſſons in ſome "other place!" Frightened at this diſcourſe, I begged the uſher to be more explicit, and tell

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tell me what we had to fear; for I was not a man who could brave danger; nor had I, as yet, made the tour of Spain. " I will (ſaid " he) tell you what is neceſſary to be known, " that you may comprehend the jeopardy in " which we are. When I entered into the " ſervice of the phyſician, which is about a " year ago, he ſaid to me one morning, after " having brought me into the preſence of his " wife, ' Marcos, behold your miſtreſs: this " is the lady whom you are to attend every " where.' I admired Donna Mergellina, I " thought her wonderful pretty, exceſſively " handſome, and was particularly charmed " with the agreeable air that diffuſed itſelf " through her whole mein: ' Sir (anſwered " I to the phyſician) I am too happy in being " permitted to ſerve ſuch a charming lady.' " Mergellina, diſguſted at my anſwer, ſaid in a " paſſion, ' A pretty fellow, indeed! methinks " you take a great deal of liberty.—I want " none of your compliments—not I.' Such " words from a mouth ſo agreeable, ſurpriſed " me very much; I could not reconcile this " ruſtic and inſolent manner of ſpeaking with " the gentle appearance of my miſtreſs: but " her huſband, who was uſed to it, rejoiced " at his having a wife of ſuch a rare cha- " racter, told me that his ſpouſe was a pro- " digy of virtue; and perceiving that ſhe put " on her veil, and prepared to go to maſs, " bade me conduct her to church. We were " no ſooner in the ſtreet, than we met (which

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" is not at all extraordinary) ſeveral gentle-
" men, who, ſtruck with the fine air of Don-
" na Mergellina, paid her a great many com-
" pliments, en paſſant. She replied to them
" all; but you cannot imagine how ſilly and
" ridiculous her anſwers were. Every body
" was aſtoniſhed, and could not conceive, that
" there was a woman in the world who could
" be diſpleaſed with praiſe. ' Madam (ſaid
" I to her) take no notice of what is ſaid to
" you; it is better to keep ſilence, than to
" ſpeak in paſſion.'—' No, no (anſwered
" ſhe) I will let theſe inſolent fellows know
" that I won't be treated with diſreſpect.'
" In ſhort, ſo much impertinence eſcaped her,
" that I could not help telling her my ſenti-
" ments, at the hazard of her diſpleaſure. I
" repreſented to her, as delicately as I could,
" that ſhe perverted nature, and ſpoiled a
" thouſand good qualities by her ſavage hu-
" mour; that a woman of politeneſs and
" good-nature might inſpire love without the
" help of beauty; whereas, the handſomeſt
" perſon in the world, without meekneſs and
" good-breeding, would become the object of
" contempt. I ſtrengthened theſe arguments
" with many more of the ſame kind, calcu-
" lated for the reformation of her behaviour;
" and after having moralized a good deal, I
" was afraid that my freedom would enrage
" my miſtreſs, and bring upon me ſome
" ſevere repartee: nevertheleſs, ſhe did not
" rebel againſt my remonſtrance but contented
" herſelf

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" herſelf with neglecting it entirely, as well " as all the reſt that I was afterwards fooliſh " enough to make.

" At length I forebore to adviſe her of " her faults, and abandoned her to the fero- " city of her nature. Mean while (would " you believe it?) this ferocious diſpoſition, " this haughty woman is, within theſe two " months, entirely changed; ſhe is complai- " ſant to every body, and her behaviour moſt " agreeable; ſhe is not the ſame Mergellina " who made ſuch ſilly anſwers to the men that " ſaid obliging things to her; ſhe is become " ſenſible to praiſe; loves to be called hand- " ſome, and told that a man cannot look upon " her with impunity; and flattery is now as " agreeable to her as to any other woman; the " change is ſcarce credible; and, what will " ſurprize you ſtill more, you are the author " of ſuch a great miracle! Yes, my dear Die- " go (continued the uſher) you have meta- " morphoſed Donna Mergellina in this man- " ner, and converted that tigreſs into a lamb. " In one word, you have attracted her notice: " I have perceived it more than once, and I " am very much miſtaken in the ſex, if ſhe " has not conceived a moſt violent paſſion for " you. This, my child, is the ſad piece of " news I had to diſcloſe, and the troubleſome " dilemma in which we are."

" I can't ſee (ſaid I to the old man) that " we have ſo much cauſe to be afflicted at this " affair, or that it is a misfortune for me to

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" be beloved by a handſome lady."—" Ah, " Diego! (he replied) you talk like a young " man: you look only at the bait, without " perceiving the hook; you conſider only the " pleaſure, but I foreſee the diſagreeable con- " ſequences. All will come to light in the " end. If you continue coming to ſing at " our door, you will inflame the paſſion of " Mergellina, who, perhaps, loſing all re- " ſtraint, will betray her weakneſs before her " huſband Doctor Oloroſo; and he who ap- " pears ſo complaiſant at preſent, becauſe he " believes he has no reaſon to be jealous, will " become furious, revenge himſelf upon her, " and, in all probability, make both you and " me feel the effects of his rage."—" Why, " truly (ſaid I) Signor Marcos, your reaſons " are convincing, and I ſubmit myſelf wholly " to your advice: give me therefore direc- " tions how to behave, in order to prevent " miſchief."—" We have nothing to do (an- " ſwered he) but to give over our concert: " appear no more before my miſtreſs; and " when you are no longer ſeen, ſhe will re- " trieve her quiet. Stay at your maſter's " houſe, whither I will come, and we will " play upon the guitarre without danger. " With all my heart (ſaid I) and I promiſe " never to ſet foot within your door again." I reſolved, in good earneſt, to be as good as my word, and for the future, to keep myſelf cloſe in the ſhop, ſince the ſight of me was ſo dangerous.

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In the mean time, honeſt Marcos, with all his prudence, found, in a very few days, that the means he had contrived to extinguiſh the flame of Donna Mergellina produced a quite contrary effect. The lady, not having heard me ſing for two nights ſucceſſively, aſked him, why we had diſcontinued our concert, and for what reaſon I no longer appeared? He replied, I was ſo buſy that I had not a moment to beſtow on my pleaſures. She ſeemed ſatisfied with this excuſe, and for three days more ſupported my abſence with fortitude enough; but at the end of that time, my princeſs loſt all patience, and ſaid to her ſquire, "You deceive me, Marcos; Diego muſt have ſome other reaſon for not coming hither: there is ſome myſtery in it, which I muſt have explained: ſpeak therefore, I order you, and conceal nothing of the truth."—"Madam, (anſwered he, making uſe of another expedient) ſince you muſt know the truth, I will tell you, that he commonly found ſupper over, when he went home, after our concert; and he does not chooſe to run the riſk of going to bed with an empty ſtomach,"—"How! with an empty ſtomach? (cried ſhe with marks of uneaſineſs) why had not you told me this ſooner? Go to bed ſupperleſs! poor baby! Go to him inſtantly, and bring him hither this evening. He ſha'nt go home with an empty ſtomach: there ſhall always be a plate of ſomething reſerved for him."

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" What do I hear? (ſaid the uſher, affect-
" ing ſurpriſe at her diſcourſe) Heavens, what
" a change! Is it you, madam, that talk thus?
" How long have you been thus gentle and
" compaſſionate?"—"How long! (replied ſhe, haſtily) ſince your abode in this houſe; or rather ſince you condemned my diſdainful carriage, and laboured to ſoften the roughneſs of my behaviour. But, alas! (added ſhe, in a melting ſtrain) I have paſſed from one extremity to another! from being haughty and inſenſible, I am become too ſoft and tender! I love your young friend Diego, in ſpite of all my efforts to the contrary; and his abſenſe, inſtead of weakening, adds new vigour to my love!"—" Is it poſſible (ſaid the old man) that
" a lad, who is neither handſome nor genteel,
" ſhould be the object of ſuch a violent paſ-
" ſion? I would forgive your ſentiments, had
" they been inſpired by ſome gentleman of
" ſhining accompliſhments."—" Ah, Marcos! (ſaid Mergellina, interrupting him) I don't reſemble the reſt of my ſex—or rather, notwithſtanding all your long experience, you are but little acquainted with women, if you think that merit always determines their choice. If I may be allowed to judge by myſelf, deliberation has no ſhare in their engagements; love is a diſorder of the mind, by which we are involuntarily dragged and faſtened to the object—it is a diſtemper by which we are ſeized as dogs are with madneſs: ceaſe therefore to repreſent Diego as unworthy of my tenderneſs:

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neſs: let it ſuffice that my love finds in him a thouſand good qualities which eſcape your notice, and perhaps only exiſt in my imagination. It is vain for you to tell me, that neither his features nor his make deſerve the leaſt attention. He ſeems to be born to captivate, and fairer than the day! beſides, he has a ſweetneſs of voice that charms me, and, in my opinion, plays on the guitarre with a grace peculiar to himſelf."—"But, madam (replied Marcos) do you conſider who this Diego is? the meanneſs of his condition?"—"Mine is not much higher than his (ſaid ſhe, interrupting him again) and if I was even a woman of quality that ſhould be no objection."

The reſult of this converſation was, that the uſher, thinking he ſhould make little progreſs with his remonſtrances, ceaſed to oppoſe the infatuation of his miſtreſs; as an expert pilot yields to the ſtorm that drives him from the port in view. He did more for the ſatisfaction of his patroneſs; for coming to me, he took me aſide, and having recounted what paſſed between her and him; "You ſee, Diego, (added he) that we cannot help continuing our concert at Mergellina's door. There is a neceſſity for that lady's ſeeing you again, my friend; otherwiſe we ſhall commit ſome piece of indiſcretion, that may do infinite prejudice to her reputation." I was not hard-hearted, but told Marcos, I would in the twilight repair to the place of aſſignation, with my guitarre, and that he might go and regale his miſtreſs with this agreeable piece of news. In this he did

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did not fail; and that paſſionate inamorata was raviſhed to underſtand that ſhe ſhould have the pleaſure of ſeeing and hearing me that very evening.

A diſagreeable accident, however, had well-nigh baulked her expectation. For I could not leave the ſhop before night, which, for my ſins, was extremely dark; and as I groped along the ſtreet, and had got about half way to the place of rendezvous, I was crowned, from a window with the contents of a perfuming pan, that did not at all delight my ſenſe of ſmelling; though I may ſafely ſay, I loſt none of it, ſo exactly was I equipped. In this condition, I did not know what courſe to take. Had I returned to the ſhop, I ſhould have afforded a very diverting ſcene to my comrades, and expoſed myſelf to a thouſand unſavory jeſts; and I was ſhocked at the thought of going in this fine pickle to Mergellina: this laſt, however, I reſolved upon, and going to the phyſician's houſe, found the old ſquire waiting for me at the door. When he told me that Doctor Oloroſo being in bed, we might freely divert ourſelves; I anſwered, I muſt firſt clean my clothes; and then related my misfortune: he ſympathized with me, and conducted me into a hall where his miſtreſs was, who no ſooner learned my adventure, and ſaw my condition, than ſhe grieved for me as much as if I had met with the greateſt misfortune; and beſtowed a thouſand curſes on the perſon who had thus accommodated me. "But, madam (ſaid Marcos to her) mode-

"rate

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" rate your tranſports; and conſider that this " event, being the pure effect of chance, ought " not to be ſo deeply reſented."—" Why ſhould not I (anſwered ſhe) deeply reſent the injury that has been done to this poor lamb, this dove without gall, who does not even complain of the outrage he has received? O that I was a man this moment to revenge it!"

She ſaid a thouſand things more that denoted the exceſs of her love, which ſhe made appear no leſs by her actions; for while Marcos was buſied in wiping me with a towel, ſhe ran to her chamber and fetched from it a box full of all ſorts of perfumes; ſweetening my clothes with the ſcent of odoriferous drugs which ſhe burned, and afterwards ſprinkling them all over with eſſences. The fumigation and aſperſion performed, this charitable lady went herſelf into the kitchen for ſome bread, wine, and ſlices of roaſted mutton, which ſhe had ſet apart for my entertainment: and obliging me to eat, took pleaſure in ſerving me, ſometimes by cutting me victuals, and ſometimes by filling wine; in ſpite of all that Marcos and I could ſay to diſſuade her from ſuch condeſcenſion. When I had ſupped, we gentlemen of the band began to tune our voices to our guitarres, and performed a concert that charmed Mergellina. We affected, indeed, to ſing thoſe airs, the words of which flattered her paſſion! and it muſt be obſerved, that while I ſung, I frequently ogled her with the tail of my eye in ſuch a manner, as blew the coals of love;

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love; for I began to be pleaſed with the game. Although the concert laſted a long time, I was not at all tired; and as for the lady, to whom the hours ſeemed minutes, ſhe would willingly have ſpent the night, in hearing us; had not the old uſher, to whom the minutes ſeemed hours, put her in mind of its being late. This ſhe gave him the trouble to repeat ten or twelve times; but ſhe had to do with one who was indefatigable on that ſubject, and who gave her no reſt until I was gone. This experienced perſon, ſeeing his miſtreſs abandoned to a fooliſh paſſion, was afraid of ſome croſs accident; and his fear was ſoon juſtified: for the doctor, either ſuſpecting ſome ſecret intrigue, or agitated by the demon of jealouſy, who had reſpected him hitherto, took it in his head to find fault with our concerts, which he forbad in a peremptory manner, and, without giving any reaſon for his diſguſt, declared that for the future, he would ſuffer no ſtrangers to come within his doors.

Marcos adverti ſed me of this declaration, which was particularly intended for me, and mortified me not a little; for I had conceived hopes I was ſorry to forego. Nevertheleſs, that I may act the faithful hiſtorian I will own that I bore the misfortune with patience. This was not the caſe with Mergellina, whoſe ſentiments were more inflamed than ever. "My dear Marcos! (ſaid ſhe to her uſher) from you alone I expect aſſiſtance: fall upon ſome method, I beg of you, to bring Diego and me together

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together in private."—"What do you aſk! (cried the old man in a rage.) I have been already but too complaiſant, and will not undertake, by gratifying your ſilly paſſion, to diſhonour my maſter, ruin your reputation, and entail infamy upon myſelf. I, who have always maintained the character of an irreproachable domeſtic! I will rather quit your family than ſerve you in ſuch a ſhameful manner."—"Ah, Marcos! (cried the lady, interrupting him, and frightened at his laſt words) you pierce my very heart, when you talk of leaving me! Cruel man! are you going to forſake me now, after having reduced me to this condition! Give me back my former pride, and that ſavegeneſs of diſpoſition you have deprived me of! Why do I not ſtill poſſeſs theſe happy defects, which would have preſerved my tranquility: whereas your indiſcreet remonſtrances have robbed me of the repoſe I enjoyed! You have corrupted my morals by endeavouring to correct them.—But what do I ſay (added ſhe) wretch that I am! why do I reproach you unjuſtly; No, my father, you are not the author of my misfortune, which cruel fate alone decrees! Don't therefore take notice, I conjure you, of the extravagant diſcourſe that eſcapes me! Alas! my paſſion diſorders my underſtanding! Have pity on my weakneſs, you are all my comfort, and if you have any regard for my life, do not refuſe your aſſiſtance."

At theſe words, her tears redoubling in ſuch a manner that ſhe could not go on, ſhe covered

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ed her face with her handkerchief, and threw herſelf upon a chair, like a perſon ſinking under affliction. Old Marcos, who was perhaps the beſt ſoul of an uſher that ever lived, could not reſiſt ſuch a moving ſight, which affected him ſo much, that he even mingled his tears with thoſe of his miſtreſs, and ſaid, with an air of tenderneſs, "Ah, madam, how bewitching you are! I am not proof againſt your ſorrow! My virtue is vanquiſhed, and I promiſe you my aſſiſtance. I am not ſurpriſed that love has been able to make you forget your duty, when pity only has ſevered me from mine." Accordingly, the uſher, in ſpite of his irreproachable conduct, devoted himſelf very obligingly to the paſſion of Mergellina, and having come one morning to inform me of what had happened, told me at parting, that he had already concerted a plan for procuring a ſecret interview between the lady and me. This re-animated my hope, but in leſs than two hours after I received a piece of very bad news. A journeyman apothecary in the neighbourhood, one of our cuſtomers, came in to be ſhaved, and while I prepared the lather, ſaid, "Signor Diego, what is the matter with your friend, the old ſquire, Marcos de Obregon! Do you know that he is going to leave Doctor Oloroſo?" Upon my anſwering in the negative, he reſumed, "It is certainly true: he is to be diſmiſſed this very day: his maſter and mine have been juſt talking on that ſubject, while I was by; and to the beſt of my remem-

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remembrance, their converſation was thus:" 'Signor Apuntado (ſaid the phyſician) I 'have a favour to aſk: being diſſatisfied with 'an old uſher who has ſerved me ſome time, 'I want to put my wife under the direction 'of a faithful, ſevere, and vigilant duenna.'— 'I underſtand you (ſaid my maſter, interrupting him) you have occaſion for Dame Melancia, who was my wife's governante, and has lived in the family theſe ſix weeks that I have been a widower: Though ſhe is very uſeful to me in houſekeeping, I yield her to you, on account of my concern for your honour. You may depend upon her for the ſafety of your forehead: ſhe is a jewel of a duenna*, and a very dragon to guard the chaſtity of the female ſex: during the whole term of twelve years that ſhe was with my wife, who, you know, was both young and handſome, I never ſaw ſo much as the ſhadow of a gallant in my houſe. No, faith! it was no place for them to play pranks in, and let me tell you, the defunct, in the beginning, had a ſtrong propenſity to coquetry, but Dame Melancia ſoon reclaimed, and inſpired her with a taſte for virtue. In a word, ſhe is a treaſure, and you will thank me more than once for the preſent I make of her.' The doctor was rejoiced at this encomium, and Signor Apuntador and he are agreed,

* The duennas are diſcreet females of approved fidelity, to whoſe care the Spaniards commit the chaſtity of their wives and daughters—an office happily excluded from this land of virtuous freedom.

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agreed, that the duenna ſhall this very day fill the place of the old uſher."

This piece of news, which I believed, and was certainly true, diſturbed the ideas of pleaſure with which I had begun again to regale myſelf; and Marcos, in the afternoon, confounded them effectually, by confirming the report of the journeyman apothecary. "My "dear Diego (ſaid the honeſt uſher) I am "very glad that Doctor Oloroſo has diſmiſ-"ſed me. A circumſtance that ſpares me "a great deal of trouble: for I not only "found myſelf engaged in a bad employ-"ment; but likewiſe under a neceſſity of con-"triving tricks and ſtratagems to bring Mer-"gellina and you together in private. What "a delimma had I brought myſelf into! "Thank heaven, I am freed from thoſe trou-"bleſome cares, and the dangers that attend "them! For your part, my ſon, you ought "to conſole yourſelf for the loſs of a few "ſweet moments, which might have been "followed by numberleſs ſorrows." I reliſhed the reflection of Marcos, becauſe I no longer had any hopes; and thought no more of the affair. I confeſs, I was not one of thoſe ſtubborn lovers who are animated by the obſtacles in their way: but had I been ſuch an one, Dame Melancia was enough to make me quit my purſuit: for the character I had heard of that duenna ſeemed capable of driving any gallant to deſpair. Nevertheleſs, in whatever colours ſhe had been painted to me, I learned

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learned two or three days after, that the doctor's wife had either lulled this Argus, or corrupted her fidelity. As I went out to ſhave one of our neighbours, a decent old woman ſtopping me in the ſtreet, aſked if my name was not Diego de la Fuenta: when I anſwered, Yes. "Well, then (ſaid ſhe) you are "the perſon I want. Come this night to "Donna Mergellina's door, and make ſome "ſignal by which you may be known and "admitted into the houſe."—"Very well (ſaid I to her) we muſt firſt agree upon the ſignal. I can mimick a cat charmingly, and will mew ſeveral times."—"That's enough (repli-"ed this ſhe Mercury) I will report your an-"ſwer. Your ſervant, Signor Diego—Hea-"ven bleſs you—How handſome you are! "By St. Agnes, if I were but fifteen years "old, I would not chooſe to engage you for "others." So ſaying, the officious beldame went away.

You may well think that I was furiouſly agitated by this meſſage. Adieu the reflection of Marcos, I expected night with the utmoſt impatience, and when I thought Doctor Oloroſo might be aſleep, went to her door, where I mewed ſo loud as to be heard at a good diſtance, and did great honour to the maſter who taught me ſuch a polite art. In a moment, Mergellina herſelf having opened the door ſoftly and let me in, ſhut it again in the ſame manner; and we went together into the hall where our laſt concert was held, and which

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which was lighted by a ſmall lamp that glimmered in the chimney: we ſat down cloſe by one another, for the benefit of converſing more at our eaſe; and were both very much affected: with this difference, however, that pleaſure alone was the occaſion of her emotion; while mine partook a little of fear. My princeſs in vain aſſured me, that we had nothing to dread on account of her huſband; I was ſeized with a fit of ſhivering that diſturbed my joy. "Madam (ſaid I to her) how have "you been able to deceive the vigilance of "your governante? After what I had heard "of Dame Melancia, I did not think it poſ-"ſible for you to find means to let me hear "from you, much leſs to give me a perſonal "interview." Donna Mergellina, ſmiling at my diſcourſe, anſwered, "You will ceaſe to be "ſurpriſed at the private opportunity we now "enjoy, after I have told you what paſſed "between my duenna and me. When ſhe "came firſt into the family, my huſband load-"ed her with civilities, and ſaid to me, 'Mer-'gellina; I commit you to the conduct of 'this diſcreet gentlewoman, who is a ſum-'mary of all the virtues: a mirror which 'you muſt always have before your eyes, 'for your improvement in wiſdom: this ad-'mirable perſon governed an apothecary's 'wife (a friend of mine) twelve years; and 'that in ſuch an uncommon manner, that 'ſhe became a kind of ſaint, under her in-'ſtruction'

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" This encomium, which the ſevere look of Dame Melancia did not belye, coſt me a world of tears, and threw me into deſpair. I repreſented to myſelf the lectures I muſt hear from morn to night, and the rebukes I muſt every day undergo. In ſhort, I expected to be the moſt unhappy woman in the world: and thinking it needleſs to be on the reſerve, in ſuch a cruel ſtate of expectation, I ſaid to my duenna, with a reſolute air (as ſoon as I found myſelf alone with her) ' You are ' doubtleſs preparing a great many ſufferings ' for me; but I think proper to advertiſe ' you beforehand, that I have not a great ' deal of patience; and that I will endeavour ' to give you as many mortifications as I ' can: In the mean time, I declare that my ' heart entertains a paſſion which all your re- ' monſtrances ſhall not impair; ſo you may ' take your meaſures accordingly, and re- ' double your vigilance; for I confeſs I will ' ſpare nothing to deceive it.' At theſe words, the grim-faced duenna (who, I imagined, was about to give me a ſample of her office(cleared up her auſtere countenance, and ſaid with a ſmiling air, ' I am charmed with your humour, your frankneſs encourages mine, and I ſee we are deſigned for one another: Ah, my fair Mergellina! how little are you acquainted with me when you judge by the character your ſpouſe the doctor gives me, and by this ſour aſpect I aſſume! I am ſo far from being an enemy to pleaſure, that my ſole motive

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tive for hiring myſelf as the miniſter of jealous huſbands, is, that I may the more effectually ſerve the handſome wives. I have long poſſeſſed the great myſtery of diſguiſing myſelf; and I may call myſelf doubly happy, becauſe I enjoy the convenience of ſin and the reputation of virtue at the ſame time. Between you and me this is the ſcope of mankind in general: virtue itſelf is too difficult to be acquired; and therefore people are ſatisfied with poſſeſſing the appearances of it.

'Leave your conduct to my direction, (added the governante) and I warrant you, we will ſoon impoſe upon old Doctor Oloroſo, who, by my troth, ſhall ſoon ſhare the fate of Signor Apuntador; for I don't ſee why the forehead of a phyſician ſhould be more reſpected than that of an apothecary. Poor Apuntador! how many tricks his wife and I have played him! She was a lovely creature! a good-humoured ſoul, heaven reſt it! I can aſſure you ſhe made a good uſe of her youth; and did not want abundance of admirers, whom I introduced to the houſe without ever being diſcovered by her huſband: look upon me, therefore, madam, with a more favourable eye, and be perſuaded, that whatever talent the old ſquire might have for your ſervice, you will loſe nothing by the change, and perhaps find me ſtill more uſeful than he was.'

"I leave you to judge, Diego (continued Mergellina) how much I thought myſelf obliged

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ed to the duenna, for this frank declaration for I looked upon her as a perſon of the moſt auſtere virtue; ſo apt are people to be deceived in women. Her ſincerity gained my heart in a moment; I embraced her in a tranſport of joy, that convinced her how much I was charmed with my lot, in having her for a governante; and afterwards freely imparted my ſentiments to her, and begged that ſhe would, without loſs of time, contrive a private meeting with you, which ſhe has not failed to procure. This very morning ſhe ſet at work that old woman who ſpoke to you, and who is an agent whom ſhe often employed for the apothecary's wife. But the moſt pleaſant part of this adventure (added ſhe, laughing) is, that Melancia, underſtanding from me that my huſband commonly ſleeps ſound, has gone to bed to him, and this very minute ſupplies my place. "So much the worſe, madam, (ſaid "I to Mergellina) I cannot approve this "invention: your huſband may wake and per-"ceive the cheat."—"He cannot perceive "it (anſwered ſhe, with ſome precipitation;) "do not be uneaſy on that ſcore; nor let a "groundleſs panic poiſon the delight you "ought to enjoy with a young lady who has "a regard for you."

The old doctor's wife, obſerving that I was ſtill diſmayed, notwithſtanding her aſſurance, did every thing in her power to encourage me, and practiſed ſo many different endeavours for that purpoſe, that ſhe ſucceeded at laſt, and I

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reſolved to profit by the occaſion; but juſt as Cupid, attended by the Sports and Smiles, was about to crown my happineſs, we were aſtoniſhed by a loud rap at the ſtreet door. Immediately Love and his train took wing, like a flock of fearful birds diſperſed by ſudden noiſe!—Mergellina concealed me in a hurry under a table that was in the hall; then blowing out the lamp has had been agreed upon between her govenante and her, in caſe ſuch a croſs accident ſhould happen, ſhe went to the chamber where her huſband was a-bed. In the mean time the whole houſe rung with the repeated knocks that were thundered at the door: and the doctor, ſtarting out of his ſleep, called Melancia.—The duenna, jumping out of bed (although the doctor, who miſtook her for his wife, bid her lie ſtill) joined her miſtreſs in the dark, who, feeling her, called Melancia alſo, and bid her go and ſee who knocked at the door: "Madam (anſwered the governante) I am here—Go to "bed again, if you pleaſe, and I will go and "ſee what is the matter." Mean while Mergellina, having undreſſed, ſlipt into bed to the doctor, who had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of the trick.—'Tis true, indeed, this ſcene was performed in the dark by two actreſſes, one of whom was matchleſs in her way, and the other an admirable proficient.

The duenna, wrapped in a robe de chambre, appearing ſoon after with a candle in her hand, ſaid to her maſter, "Signor Doctor, be ſo "good

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" good as to riſe: the bookſeller, Fernandez " de Buendia, our neighbour, has fallen into " an apoplexy, and you are deſired to go " with all haſte to his aſſiſtance." The phyſician dreſſed himſelf as ſoon as he could, and went away; while his wife, in a looſe gown, came along with the duenna into the hall where I was, and drawing me from under the table, more dead than alive, " You have no- " thing to fear, Diego (ſaid ſhe) recollect " yourſelf." Then, in a few words, ſhe told me what had happened, and wanted to renew the converſation which had been interrupted; but this the governante oppoſed, ſaying, " Ma- " dam, perhaps your huſband will find the " bookſeller dead, and return immediately. " Beſides (added ſhe, perceiving me benum'd " with fear) what would you do with this " poor lad? He is in no condition to main- " tain the conference, which you had better " defer till to-morrow."--Donna Mergellina conſented to this propoſal, not without regret; ſo well did ſhe love the preſent time: and I believe ſhe was very much mortified, that ſhe could not then beſtow upon the doctor the new cap ſhe had deſtined for him.

As for my own part, leſs ſorry for having been baulked of love's moſt precious favours, than glad to be out of danger, I went back to my maſter's houſe, where I ſpent the night in reflecting upon my adventure.—I heſitated ſome time about going to the place of rendezvous next night, having as bad an opinion of

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this second enterprize as of the first: but the devil, who is always laying close siege to us, or rather, on such occasions, takes possession of our faculties, suggested that I should be a great booby to stop short in the middle of such a delightful journey, represented to my fancy Mergellina adorned with new charms, and heightened the value of the pleasures that awaited me: so that I resolved to pursue my point, and flattering myself with the hope of behaving with more courage than before, I repaired in this disposition to the doctor's door, between eleven and twelve next night, which was so dark that not one star appeared in the firmament. I mewed two or three times, to give notice that I was in the street; and nobody coming to the door, I not only repeated the signal, but also mimicked all the different expressions of a cat, which a shepherd of Olmedo had taught me; and acquitting myself so well, that a neighbour going home, and mistaking me for one of those animals whose notes I imitated, took up a flint stone he found at his feet and threw it at me with his whole strength, saying, "Curse on the caterwauler!" I received the blow upon my head, which stunned me so much, that I had well nigh tumbled backwards. I felt myself wounded: a circumstance sufficient to give me a disgust to gallantry; and, losing my love with my blood, returned to our house, where I alarmed and raised the whole family. My master examined and dressed my wound, which he thought

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thought dangerous; but it was attended with no bad conſequence, and in three weeks diſappeared.—During all that time I heard not one ſyllable about Mergellina: and it is not unlikely that Dame Melancia, in order to detach her from me, introduced her to ſome better acquaintance. But this gave me no concern, for as ſoon as I found myſelf perfectly cured, I left Madrid, in order to perform my tour of Spain."

CHAP. VIII.

Gil Blas and his companion come up with a man whom they perceive ſoaking cruſts of bread in a ſpring; and enter into converſation with him.

SIGNOR Diego de Fuenta recounted a good many more adventures that had happened to him; but, in my opinion, ſo little worth the breath they coſt, that I ſhall paſs them over in ſilence; though I was obliged to hear the recital, which was ſo tedious, that it brought us as far as Ponte de Duera. In this village we ſtaid the remaining part of the day; and at the inn where we lodged, ordered for ſupper a diſh of cabbage-ſoup and a roaſted hare, the ſpecies of which we were at great pains to prove beforehand. On the morrow, at break of day, we purſued our journey, after having repleniſhed our bottle with pretty good wine, and furniſhed our knapſack with ſome ſlices of bread, and the half of the hare which remained from our ſupper.

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When we had gone about two leagues, we began to be hungry; and perceiving ſeveral large trees, which formed an agreeable ſhade in the fields, about two hundred paces from the highway, we went thither to make a halt, and found a man ſeven or eight and twenty years old, ſoaking ſome cruſts in a fountain. A long ſword lay by him on the graſs, with an havreſack, of which he had unloaded his ſhoulders? and though he was poorly cloth-ed, he diſcovered a good ſhape and mein.—We accoſted him in a civil manner, upon which he ſaluted us with great complaiſance; and preſenting his cruſts, aſked with a ſmile, if we would be of his meſs; we anſwered yes, provided he would give us leave to improve the repaſt, by joining our breakfaſt with his. He freely conſenting, we immediately pro-duced our victuals, which afforded no un-pleaſing view to the ſtranger, who cried in a tranſport of joy, "How, gentlemen! egad "there's ſtore of amunition for the belly! I "ſee you are provident people; for my own "part, I ſeldom travel ſo well provided, but "depend a good deal upon chance. Notwith-"ſtanding my preſent ſituation, however, I "may ſay without vanity, that I ſometimes "make a pretty brilliant appearance.—You "muſt know, that I am uſually treated like "a prince, and have guards in my train." "I underſtand you (ſaid Diego) you would "intimate that you are a player."—"You "have hit it (replied the other;) I have acted "theſe

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" theſe fifteen years at leaſt; for I performed " ſome ſmall parts while I was yet a child."— " To be plain with you (ſaid the barber, " ſhaking his head) I can ſcarce believe what " you ſay.—I know what ſort of people the " comedians are; theſe gentlemen do not travel " a-foot, and dine with St. Anthony as you " do; Therefore I cannot help thinking that " you are no more than a candle ſnuffer."— " You may think of me as you pleaſe (re- " plied the ſtage-player;) but I affirm, that I " act the very top parts, and among the reſt " that of the lover."—" If that be the caſe " (ſaid my comrade) I congratulate you upon " it; and am very proud, that Signor Gil Blas " and I have the honour to breakfaſt with a " perſon of ſuch importance."

We then began to gnaw our cruſts, and the precious remains of the hare, beſtowing ſuch rude embraces on the bottle, that it was empty in a very ſhort time; and being ſo buſy with what we were about, that we ſcarce ſpoke one word during the repaſt; which being ended, the converſation was thus reſumed: " I am " ſurpriſed (ſaid the barber to the player) to " ſee you in ſuch indifferent circumſtances: " for a ſtage hero, methinks, you have a very " needy appearance: you will pardon my free- " dom."—" Your freedom! (cried the actor) " ah! truely you are little acquainted with " Melchior Zapata. Thank heaven, I am " not at all exceptious: you do me a pleaſure " in ſpeaking ſo frankly; for I myſelf love to

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" tell my mind without reſerve. I ſincerely " own I am not rich.—Look (added he, " ſhowing that his doublet was lined with " play bills) this is the ſtuff that uſually " ſerves me for lining; and if you have any " curioſity to ſee my wardrobe, it ſhall be " forthwith gratified." At the ſame time he took out of his knapſack an old ſuit laced with tinſel, a ſorry hat with ſome old plumes of feathers, a pair of ſilk ſtockings full of holes, and red buſkins very much worn. " You ſee " (ſaid he) I am tolerably poor."—" That's " what ſurpriſes me (replied Diego.) So you " have neither wife nor daughter?"—" I have " a wife, young and handſome (ſaid Zapata) " yet I am never a bit the better for it, ſo " wonderfully capricious is my fate. I mar- " ried a beautiful actreſs, in hopes that ſhe " would not let me ſtarve; and unfortunate- " ly for me, ſhe is incorruptibly chaſte. Who " the devil would not have been deceived as I " was? There happened to be one virtuous wo- " man among the ſtrollers, and ſhe muſt fall " to my lot!"—" Truely you have had bad " luck (ſaid the barber:) but why did not " you marry an actreſs of the king's company " at Madrid, in which caſe you could not " have been diſappointed?"—" I grant it " (replied the player) but a plague upon it, " a little country-ſtroller dares not aſpire to " thoſe famous heroines: that is as much as " an actor of the prince's company can do; " ſome of whom are even obliged to match

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" in the city.—Luckily for them, the city is
" well ſtored, and they often light on yoke-
" fellows not a whit inferior to thoſe princeſſes
" who were brought up behind the ſcenes."

" Have you never endeavoured (ſaid my
" companion to him) to be introduced into
" that company? Muſt one have infinite me-
" rit to be admitted into it?"—" Good! (re-
" plied Melchior) you are merry with your
" infinite merit.—It is compoſed of twenty
" actors: aſk their character in town, and
" you will hear them finely handled. More
" than one half deſerve to carry the knapſack
" ſtill; but for all that it is no eaſy matter
" to be received among them. One muſt have
" money, or powerful friends, to ſupply the
" want of talents.—This I ought to know,
" ſince I am juſt come from making a trial at
" Madrid, where I have been hooted and hiſſed
" in a helliſh manner, although I deſerved to
" be applauded to the ſkies; for I roared, rant-
" ed, burleſqued nature an hundred times!
" and moreover, in my declamation, clapped
" my clinched fiſt to my princeſs's noſe.—In
" a word, I performed in the taſte of the great
" actors in vogue; and yet the ſame audience
" that reliſhed this behaviour in them, could
" not endure it in me.—You ſee the force of
" prejudice! wherefore, finding myſelf inca-
" pable of pleaſing on that ſtage, and having
" nothing to ſecure my reception in defiance
" of the town, I am going back to Zemora,
" where I ſhall rejoin my wife and comrades,

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niſhed with Greek and Latin devices. The barber no ſooner perceived the inſcriptions than he ſaid, " All theſe Greek mottos ſavour " ſtrongly of my uncle Thomas, who, I'll " hold a wager, has a hand in the buſineſs, " for, between you and me, he is a learned " man, and has a power of college books by " heart: his greateſt fault is, that he inceſſant- " ly quotes paſſages from them in converſa- " tion, which is not agreeable to every body. " Beſides (added he) my uncle has tranſlated " a good many Greek and Latin authors, and " is quite maſter of the ancients, as one may " ſee by the learned remarks which he has " made: had it not been for him, we ſhould " never have known, that in the city of " Athens children cried when they were flog- " ged: we owe that diſcovery to his profound " erudition."

After my comrade and I had obſerved all thoſe things which I have mentioned, we were curious to know the cauſe of ſuch preparations, and went forward to enquire, when Diego recognized the director of the feaſt, Signor Thomas de la Fuenta, whom he accoſted with great eagerneſs. The ſchool-maſter did not, at firſt, know the young barber; ſo much was he altered during an abſence of ten years: but, recollecting him at laſt, he embraced him affectionately, ſaying, " What! " do I ſee thee then, Diego, my dear ne- " phew? Do I ſee thee returned to the town " where thou firſt ſaweſt the light? Thou art

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" come to visit thy household-gods; and " heaven restores thee safe and sound to thy " kindred! O day, thrice and four times hap- " py! O day, worthy to be marked with a " white stone! A world of changes have hap- " pened, my friend (pursued he:) thy uncle " Pedro, the poet, has fallen a victim to Plu- " to, having died three months ago. That " miser, while alive, was afraid of wanting " the necessaries of life. *Argenti pallebat* " *amore.* For though he received large pen- " sions from several grandees, he did not " spend ten pistoles a year for his subsistence; " and was even served by a valet whom he " did not maintain. That fool, more sense- " less than the Grecian Aristippus, who or- " dered his slaves to throw away, in the de- " serts of Africa, the riches they carried, as a " burthen that incommoded them in their " march—he, I say, heaped up all the gold " and silver he could scrape together; and " for whom? for those very heirs he would " not so much as see. He died worth thirty- " thousand ducats, which thy father, thy un- " cle Bertrand, and I, have equally shared " among us; so that we are able to settle our " children to our heart's desire. My brother " Nicholas has already disposed of thy sister " Theresa, whom he has given in marriage " to the son of one of our alcaldes. *Connubio* " *junxit stabili, propriumque decavit.* These " nuptials, performed under the most happy " auspices, we have celebrated these two days with

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" with ſuch preparation; three tents being " pitched in the plain, one for each of the " three heirs of Pedro, who, in their turns, " bear the expence of the day. I wiſh thou " hadſt arrived ſooner, to have ſeen the be- " ginning of our rejoicings. The day before " yeſterday, when they were married, thy fa- " ther gave a ſumptuous entertainment, which " was followed by a courſe of the ring: thy " uncle, the mercer, treated yeſterday, and re- " galed us with a paſtoral feaſt; ten of the " genteeleſt youths, and as many handſome " maidens, were dreſſed like ſhepherds, all " the ribbons and points in his ſhop being " employed to adorn them.—This gay com- " pany performed ſeveral dances, and ſung " a thouſand light and tender catches: never- " theleſs, though nothing was ever more gal- " lant, the ſpectators did not ſeem to reliſh " it, which ſhows that paſtoral is quite out of " date."

" To-day (added he) every thing is to be at " my coſt, and I will exhibit to the inhabi- " tants of Olmedo a ſhow of my own inven- " tion. *Finis coronabit opus.* I have order- " ed a theatre to be raiſed, on which (God " willing) I will make my ſcholars repreſent " a piece of my own compoſing, intitled, " The Diverſions of Muley Bugentuf, King " of Morocco. It will be extremely well " acted, becauſe I have ſcholars who declaim " like the players of Madrid: they are the " ſons of faſhionable people living at Penna-

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" fiel and Segovia, who are boarded with me, " and are become excellent actors under my " inſtruction. Their performance will appear " to be of a maſterly ſtamp, *ut ita dicam.* " With regard to the piece, I ſhall ſay no- " thing, that thou mayeſt enjoy the pleaſure " of ſurprize; but only obſerve that it muſt " tranſport the ſpectators: for it is one of " thoſe tragic ſubjects which wake the ſoul " by the images of death they preſent to the " view.—I am of Ariſtotle's opinion, that " the chief end of tragedy is to raiſe terror. " Oh! if I had attached myſelf to the drama, " I would have introduced none but bloody- " minded princes and heroic aſſaſſins on the " ſcene, and would have bathed myſelf in " gore; and in my tragedies not only the " principal perſons but even their guards " ſhould have periſhed. I would have mur- " dered them all, to the very prompter. In " a word my taſte is horror: and we ſee that " ſuch poems captivate the multitude, ſup- " port the luxury of the players, and enable " the author to live at his eaſe."

Juſt as he had done ſpeaking, we ſaw coming out of the village into the plain a great concourſe of men and women. Theſe were no other than the new married couple, accompanied by their relations and friends, and preceeded by ten or twelve muſicians, who, playing all together, performed a moſt thundering concert. We went up to meet them, and Diego made himſelf known; upon which the

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the whole assembly broke out into shouts of joy, and every one was eager to embrace him; so that he was sufficiently employed in receiving their expressions of friendship. His whole family, as well as all who were present, having well nigh smothered him with caresses, his father said to him, "Welcome, Diego; thou "findest thy parents somewhat bettered in "their circumstances, my child. I shall say "no more at present, but explain myself more "particularly by and by." Mean while the company, advancing into the plain, repaired to the tents, and sat down at the tables that were covered; and I and my companion, whom I would not quit, dined with the bridegroom and bride, who seemed to be very well matched. The repast was pretty long, because the school-master had the vanity to furnish three courses, in order to excel his brothers, who had not treated with such magnificence.

After the banquet, all the guests expressed impatience to see the representation of Signor Thomas's piece, not doubting (as they said) that the production of such a fine genius would answer their most sanguine expectation. Accordingly, approaching the stage, before which the musicians had already taken their seats, in order to play between the acts, every body, in the most profound silence, waited for the beginning. The actors appeared on the scene, and the author, with his poem in his hand, sat down on one side, to prompt them. It was not without reason that he told

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us the piece was tragical; for, in the firſt act, the king of Morocco, by way of recreation, ſhot an hundred mooriſh ſlaves with arrows: in the ſecond, he beheaded thirty Portugueſe officers, whom one of his captains had made priſoners of war: and in the third and laſt, this monarch, mad with his wives, ſet fire with his own hand to a detached palace in which they were ſhut up, and reduces them and it to aſhes. The Mooriſh ſlaves, as well as the Portugueſe officers, were figures of ozier, very artfully made: and the palace, compoſed of paper ſeemed all of a flame by an artificial fire-work. This conflagration, accompanied with a thouſand doleful ſhrieks, that ſeemed to iſſue from the midſt of the flames, concluded the piece, and cloſed the ſcene in a very diverting manner. The whole plain echoed with the applauſe that was given to ſuch a fine tragedy, which juſtified the good taſte of the poet, and ſhowed that he knew how to chooſe his ſubject.

I thought there was no more to be ſeen, after the Diverſions of Muley Bugentuf; but I was miſtaken: for we were advertiſed of a new ſhow by the ſound of drums and trumpets. This was a diſtribution of prizes: Thomas de la Fuenta, to make the feaſt more ſolemn, having ordered all his ſcholars (as well thoſe who were boarded with him as the reſt) to compoſe, and intending to beſtow on thoſe who had ſucceeded beſt, books bought at Segovia with his own coin. Immediately, there-

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therefore, two ſchool-forms were brought upon the ſtage, with a preſs full of little books handſomely bound; then all the actors returned upon the ſcene, and ranged themſelves round Signor Thomas, who looked as big as the head maſter of a college, and held a paper in his hand on which were written the names of thoſe who were to obtain the prizes: this he gave to the king of Morocco, who began to read it with a loud voice; and every ſcholar who was called, going in a reſpectful manner, received a book from the pedant, who was afterwards crowned with bays, and ordered to ſit down on one of the benches, that he might be expoſed to the admiration of the crowd. Nevertheleſs, how deſirous ſoever the ſchool-maſter was of ſending home the ſpectators ſatisfied, he could by no means effect it; becauſe having diſtributed almoſt all the prizes among his boarders, as the cuſtom is, the mothers of ſome of the reſt, being preſent, were offended: and openly accuſed the pedant of partiality, in ſuch a manner, that this entertainment, which had hitherto been ſo glorious for him, had like to have ended in miſchief, like the feaſt of the Lapithæ.

The End of the SECOND BOOK.

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THE ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS OF SANTILLANE.

BOOK III.

CHAP I.

The arrival of Gil Blas at Madrid; with an account of the firſt maſter whom he ſerved in that city.

HAVING ſtaid ſome time with the young barber, I afterwards joined a merchant of Segovia, with four mules, on which he had tranſported goods to Valladolid, and was returning with them unloaded. We became acquainted on the road, and he conceived ſuch a friendſhip for me, that he inſiſted upon my lodging at his houſe when we arrived at Segovia. There he detained me two days; and when

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when I was ready to ſet out for Madrid, along with a carrier, he intruſted me with a letter, which he deſired I would in perſon deliver, according to the direction, without telling me that it was a recommendation. I did not fail to preſent it to Signor Mattheo Melendez, a woolen-draper, who lived near the Sun-gate, at the corner of the Trunkmaker's-ſtreet; and he no ſooner opened it, and read the contents, than he ſaid, with a complaiſant air, "Signor Gil Blas, Pedro Pelacio, my correſpondent, writes ſo preſſingly in your behalf, that I cannot diſpenſe with your lodging at my houſe. He moreover intreats me to find a place for you; and I undertake the office with pleaſure, being perſuaded that I ſhall find no difficulty in procuring for you a good ſettlement."

I accepted the offer of Melendez with ſo much the more joy, as my finances were ſenſibly diminiſhed: but I did not live long at his expence; for in eight days he gave me to know, that he had recommended me to a gentleman of his acquaintance, who wanted a valet de chambre; and that, in all probability, I would be preferred to the poſt. The gentleman coming in at that moment, "Signor (ſaid Melendez, ſhowing me to him) this is the young man I mentioned to you. He is a youth of honour and ſobriety, and I can anſwer for his good behaviour, as much as for my own." The cavalier, having looked at me attentively, ſaid he liked my coun-

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countenance, and took me into his ſervice. "He may follow me now (added he) and I "will inſtruct him in his duty." At theſe words he bad the merchant good-morrow, and conducting me into the great ſtreet juſt by St. Philip's Church, we entered a pretty good houſe, one wing of which he poſſeſſed; and going up five or ſix ſteps of a ſtair, he introduced me into a chamber, ſecured by two ſtrong doors, which he opened, and in the firſt I perceived a ſmall window, grated with iron; through this chamber we went into another, where there was a bed and other furniture, more calculated for convenience than ſhow.

If my new maſter conſidered me attentively at the houſe of Melendez, I examined him with great earneſtneſs in my turn. He was a man turned of fifty, ſeemed to be ſerious and reſerved though good natured withal; ſo that I conceived no bad opinion of him. He put ſeveral queſtions to me about my family, and being ſatisfied with my anſwers, "Gil Blas, "(ſaid he) I believe thou art a ſenſible young "fellow, and I am very glad to have ſuch an "one in my ſervice. As for thee, thou ſhalt "have no cauſe to complain: I will give thee "ſix rials a day, for victuals, clothes, wages "and all, excluſive of ſome little perquiſites "thou mayeſt enjoy, and I am eaſily ſerved; "for I keep no table, but always dine abroad. "—All that thou haſt to do in a morning is "to clean my clothes, and thou ſhalt be at "thy

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" thy own diſpoſal during the reſt of the day:
" take care only to come back early in the
" evening, and wait for me at the door. This
" is all I exact." After having thus pre-
ſcribed my duty, he took out his purſe and gave me ſix rials, as a beginning to fulfil articles; then going out, he locked the doors himſelf, and putting the keys in his pocket, " Friend
" (ſaid he) don't follow me: go where you
" pleaſe, but be ſure to be on the ſtair when
" I return in the evening." So ſaying, he left me to diſpoſe of myſelf as I ſhould think proper.

" In good faith, Gil Blas (ſaid I to my-
" ſelf) thou couldſt not have found a better
" maſter: what! to light on a man, who,
" for bruſhing his clothes, and helping him
" to dreſs of a morning gives me ſix rials
" per day, with liberty to walk and take my
" diverſion, like a ſcholar during the va-
" cation! Egad, this is the happieſt of all
" ſituations! No wonder that I was ſo de-
" ſirous of being at Madrid: I had certainly
" ſome ſupernatural intimation of the happi-
" neſs that awaited me." I ſpent the day in ſtrolling about the ſtreets, diverting myſelf with looking at every thing that was new to me, and this gave me ſufficient employment. In the evening, after having ſupped at an eating-houſe not far from our lodgings, I betook myſelf to the place whither my maſter had ordered me to repair, and where he himſelf arrived three quarters of an hour after me, ſeemingly

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ſeemingly well pleaſed with my punctuality. "Very well (ſaid he) this is right: I love to "ſee ſervants attentive to their duty." So ſaying, he opened the doors of his apartment, and ſhut them again as ſoon as we had got in: being in the dark, he took a tinder-box and ſtruck a light, by the help of which I aſſiſted to undreſs him. When he was a-bed, I lighted, by his order, a lamp that ſtood in his chimney and carried the candle into the antichamber, where I went to ſleep in a bed without curtains.—Next morning he got up between nine and ten o'clock, and, when I had duſted his clothes, counted me ſix more rials, and diſmiſſed me till the evening: after which he went out alſo, not without locking his doors with great care; ſo we parted again for the remaining part of the day.

Such was our manner of living, which I found very agreeable; and the beſt joke of all was, I did not know my maſter's name: Melendez himſelf was ignorant of it, being only acquainted with him as a gentleman who came ſometimes to his ſhop, and bought cloth of him as he had occaſion for it. Our neighbours could give me no better information; all of them aſſuring me, that my maſter was utterly unknown to them, although he had lived two years in the ward. They told me that he viſited nobody in the neighbourhood; and ſome of them, accuſtomed to make raſh inferences, concluded from thence, that he was no better than he ſhould be. They went ſtill farther,

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farther, ſuſpecting him to be a ſpy of the king of Portugal, and charitably advertiſed me of the ſuſpicion, that I might take my meaſures accordingly. I was diſturbed at this advice; and reflected, that if the thing was ſo, I ſhould run the riſk of viſiting the priſon of Madrid. I could not confide in my innocence, my paſt misfortunes having taught me to dread juſtice; for I had found by experience, that if ſhe does not not put the innocent to death, ſhe at leaſt treats them with ſo little hoſpitality, that her lodgers are always in a very melancholy ſituation.

In ſuch a delicate conjuncture I conſulted Melendez, who did not know how to adviſe me; for if he could not believe that my maſter was a ſpy, on the other hand, he had no certain reaſon to think otherwiſe; ſo that I reſolved to obſerve my patron narrowly, and to leave him, if I ſhould perceive that he was undoubtedly an enemy to the ſtate; but I thought prudence, and the eaſineſs of my place, required that I ſhould be firſt perfectly ſure of his practiſes. With this view I began to keep a ſtrict eye over his actions: and in order to ſound him, "Sir (ſaid I, one even-"ing, while I undreſſed him) one does not "know how to live, ſo as to avoid ſlander: "the world is very malicious, and we, among "others, are very little obliged to our neigh-"bours. You cannot gueſs in what manner the "malicious creatures talk of us."—Right "Gil Blas (anſwered he) but what can they

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" ſay of us, child?"—" Ah! truly (I repied)
" ſcandal never wants matter. Virtue herſelf
" furniſhes food for it. Our neighbours ſay
" that we are dangerous people, and deſerve
" to be taken notice of by the government.
" In a word, you are thought to be a ſpy for
" the king of portugal." While I pronounced theſe words, I looked hard at my maſter, as Alexander* eyed his phyſician; and employing all my penetration to diſcover what effect my report produced in him, thought I obſerved an emotion that too well agreed with the conjectures of the neighbourhood, and he fell into a fit of muſing, upon which I did not put the moſt favourable conſtruction; but he ſoon recovered himſelf, and ſaid, with an air of tranquility, " Gil Blas, let our neigh-
" bours think as they pleaſe, without making
" our peace depend on their imaginations;
" and ſince we give them no cauſe to think
" amiſs of us, let their opinion give us no
" uneaſineſs."

Upon this he went to bed, and I followed his example, without knowing what to think of the matter. Next day, juſt as we were going out in the morning, we heard a loud rap at the outward door; my maſter opened the other, and looking through the ſmall grate

* Alexander the Great having received a letter, intimating that his phyſician intended to poiſon him, took the cup of medicine, which he preſcribed, and ſwallowing it without heſitation put the latter into the ſuſpected perſon's hand, fixing his eye ſtedfaſtly upon him, while he read it, in order to diſtinguiſh in his countenance the ſigns of innocence or guilt.

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ſaw a decent ſort of a man at it, who ſaid, "Signor cavalier, I am an alguazil, and come "hither to tell you, that the corregidor "will ſpeak with you."—"What does he "want with me?" (replied my patron) "That "I am ignorant of, Signor (ſaid the alguazil:) but if you will take the trouble to go "to his houſe, you will ſoon know."—"I "am his moſt humble ſervant (reſumed my "maſter), but have no manner of buſineſs "with him." So ſaying, he ſhut the ſecond door; and having walked up and down for ſome time, like one alarmed at the diſcourſe of the alguazil, put ſix rials into my hand, ſaying, "Gil Blas, thou mayeſt go out, my "friend. I do not intend to go abroad ſo "early, and have no further occaſion for thee "this morning." Theſe words made me believe, that the fear of being apprehended obliged him to ſtay at home; ſo that when I left him, in order to ſee if my ſuſpicions were unjuſt, I hid myſelf in a place from whence I could ſee him, if he ſhould come out; and ſhould have had the patience to ſtay there the whole morning, had he not ſpared me that trouble. But an hour after I ſaw him walking in the ſtreet with an air of aſſurance, that at firſt confounded my penetration: but, far from being duped hy thoſe appearances, I diſtruſted them, having no favourable opinion of the man. I looked upon his compoſure as a piece of affectation, and even imagined that this remaining at home was with

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with a view of ſecuring his gold and jewels; and that, in all probability, he would conſult his ſafety by immediate flight. I did not expect to ſee him again, and heſitated about going in the evening to give my attendance at the door; ſo ſure I was that he would quit the city inſtantly, to eſcape from the danger that threatened him. I did not fail, however, of being there; and, to my utter ſurpriſe, my maſter returned at his uſual time, went to bed without ſhowing the leaſt uneaſineſs, and got up next day with the ſame tranquillity."

When we had done dreſſing, ſomebody knocked at the door; upon which, my maſter looking through the grate, perceived the ſame alguazil who had been there the preceeding day, and aſked what he wanted. "Open, "(anſwered the alguazil) here is monſieur the "corregidor*." At this formidable name my blood froze in my veins; for I was curſedly afraid of theſe gentlemen ſince I had paſſed through their hands; and wiſhed that moment to be an hundred leagues from Madrid; but my patron, leſs afraid than I, opened the door, and received the judge with great reſpect. "You ſee (ſaid the corregidor to him) I do "not come to your lodgings with many at-"tendants, being deſirous of doing every "thing with as little noiſe as poſſible: and I believe that you deſerve this reſpect, not-"withſtanding the ugly reports that are ſpread

* The corregidor is the chief civil magiſtrate in every city of Spain, appointed by the king.

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" of you. Tell me, therefore, your name, " and buſineſs at Madrid?" " Signor (re- " plied my maſter) I was born in New Caſ- " tile, and my name is Don Bernard de Caſ- " tel Blazo: with regard to my buſineſs, I " divert myſelf in walking, frequenting ſhows, " and enjoying the agreeable converſation of " a few ſelect friends."—" Doubtleſs (ſaid the " judge) you have a great income."—" No, " Sir (reſumed my patron, interrupting him) " I have neither rents, lands, nor houſe."— " How do you live then?" (replied the corre- gidor.) " On that which you ſhall ſee." (ſaid Don Bernard)—at the ſame time, he lifted up a hanging, opened a door which I had not before obſerved, then another behind that, and carried the judge into a cloſet, where he ſhowed him a great trunk filled with pieces of gold.

Then he went on; " Signor, you know " that the Spaniards are enemies to work: " nevertheleſs, how averſe ſoever they may be " to trouble, I may ſafely ſay that I excel them " all in that particular; having a fund of la- " zineſs that renders me incapable of any " manner of employment. If I had a mind " to dignify my vices, I would call this lazi- " neſs a philoſophical indolence, the work of " a mind weaned from every thing that is " moſt ardently purſued in life. But I will " frankly own that I am conſtitutionally idle: " and ſo idle that if I was under a neceſſity " of working for my livelihood, I believe I " ſhould

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" ſhould let myſelf die of hunger. With a " view, therefore, to lead a life agreeable to " my humour, to free myſelf from the trou- " ble of managing my eſtate, and above all " things to ſave myſelf the trouble of a ſtew- " ard; I have converted my whole patrimo- " ny, conſiſting of ſeveral conſiderable inheri- " tances, into ready money. In this trunk " are fifty thouſand ducats more than I ſhall " ever have occaſion for, was I to live ano- " ther age; for I don't ſpend a thouſand a " year, and am already turned of fifty. I " am not at all afraid of what is to happen; " for, thank heaven! I am not addicted to any " one of the three things which commonly " bring men to ruin: I am not a ſlave to my " ſtomach, I play only for amuſement, and " am quite cured of women. So that I am " under no apprehenſion of being ranked in " my old age among thoſe voluptuous do- " tards who purchaſe the favours of courte- " zans at an extravagant price."

" What a happy man you are! (ſaid the " corregidor) you are very unjuſtly ſuſpected " of being a ſpy; that office being very unfit " for a perſon of your character. Proceed, " Don Bernard; (added he) continue the life " you now lead, and far from diſturbing your " happineſs, I declare myſelf the guardian of " it; I beg the favour of your friendſhip, and " offer you mine in return-"—" Ah, Signor! " (cried my maſter, penetrated with theſe " obliging expreſſions) I accept the precious

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" offer you make, with equal joy and reſpect;
" for in vouchſafing me your friendſhip, you
" increaſe my wealth and crown my felicity."
After this converſation, which the alguazil and I overheard at the cloſet-door, the corregidor took his leave of Don Bernard, who could not enough expreſs his gratitude; while I, to ſecond my maſter, and aſſiſt him in doing the honours of the houſe, overwhelmed the alguazil with civilities, making a thouſand profound bows, though, in the bottom of my ſoul, I harboured that diſdain and averſion which every man of honour has for one of his occupation.

CHAP. II.

The aſtoniſhment of Gil Blas, when he met Captain Rolando at Madrid, and the curious things which that robber recounted to him.

DON Bernard de Caſtel Blazo, after having waited upon the corregidor to the ſtreet, returned with expedition, to lock his ſtrong box, and all his doors that ſecured it. Then we went out both very well ſatisfied; he for having acquired a powerful friend, and I for being now enſured in my ſix rials a day. The deſire I had to recount this adventure to Melendez made me take the road to his houſe, which when I had almoſt reached, I perceived Captain Rolando! I was confounded at finding him in this place, and could not help ſhivering at ſight of him! He knew me at once,

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once, accoſted me very gravely, and preſerving ſtill his air of ſuperiority, ordered me to follow him. I obeyed with fear and trembling, ſaying to myſelf, "Alas, he will doubtleſs, make me pay what I owe him. Whither will he lead me? perhaps to ſome ſubterranean abode in this city. A plague upon it! if I thought ſo, I would let him ſee in a hurry, that I have not got the gout in my toes." As I walked behind him, I reſolved to take particular notice of the place where he ſhould ſtop, from which I propoſed to ſcamper off as faſt as my legs would carry me, ſhould it ſeem the leaſt ſuſpicious.

But Rolando ſoon baniſhed my fear, by going into a noted tavern, whither I followed him; and where he called for the beſt wine, and beſpoke dinner; in the mean time, we went into a room by ourſelves, where the Captain ſpoke in this manner: "Thou muſt "be ſurpriſed, Gil Blas, to meet thy old "commander in this place; and wilt be more "ſo ſtill when thou ſhalt hear what I am going "to relate: That day on which I left thee "in our ſubterranean retreat, and ſet out for "Manſilla with my whole company, in order "to diſpoſe of the mules and horſes which "we had taken the preceeding day, it was our "fortune to meet the ſon of the corregidor of "Leon in his coach, accompanied by four "men on horſeback well armed. We made "two of them bite the duſt, and the others "betake themſelves to flight; while the coach-

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" man, afraid of his maſter's life, cried, in a " ſuppliant voice, O dear gentlemen! in the " name of God, do not kill the only ſon of " the corregidor of Leon. My people did " not at all relent at theſe words, which, on " the contrary, inſpired them with fury: " Gentlemen (ſaid one among us) let not " the ſon of our mortal enemy eſcape: how " many people of our profeſſion hath his fa- " ther put to death! let us avenge them now, " and ſacrifice this victim to their manes. " The reſt of my men approved of this pro- " poſal; and even my lieutenant prepared to " act the high-prieſt in this ceremony, when " I held his hands, ſaying, Stop, at your pe- " ril! Why ſhould we ſhed blood unneceſſa- " rily? Let us be ſatisfied with the purſe of " this young man, whom (ſince he makes no " reſiſtance) it would be the utmoſt barbarity " to kill: beſides, he is not accountable for " the actions of his father, who does no more " than his duty in comdemning us to death; " juſt as we do our's, in rifling travellers on " the high way.

" My interceſſion was far from being un- " ſerviceable to the corregidor's ſon, from " whom we took nothing but his money; and " having carried off the horſes of the two " men we had ſlain, we ſold them, together " with our own, at Manſilla; then returning " to our cavern, which we reached next day " before it was light, we were not a little " aſtoniſhed to find the trap-door lifted up:

" and

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" and our ſurprize redoubled when we ſaw " Leonarda fettered in the kitchen. Being " briefly informed by her of what had hap- " pened, we wondered how thou couldſt out- " wit us, never having thought thee capable " of playing ſuch a clever trick, and we for- " gave thee on account of the invention. " Having untied our cook-maid, and given " orders to dreſs victuals for us, we went to " look after our horſes in the ſtable, where " the old negro, who had received no ſuſte- " nance for four-and-twenty-hours, was at the " laſt gaſp. We would have given him all " the aſſiſtance in our power, but he had loſt " his ſenſes, and was otherwiſe ſo low, that " notwithſtanding our good-will, we left the " poor devil in the clutches of death. This " did not deprive us of our appetite, which " having ſatisfied with a ſumptuous meal, we " retired to our ſeveral chambers, and ſlept " the reſt of the day: when we got up, Leo- " narda let us know that Domingo was no " more, upon which we carried him to the " cellar, where thou mayeſt remember thy " bed was, and there performed his funeral " obſequies, as if he had enjoyed the honour " of being our companion.

" Five or ſix days after it happened that, " intending to make an excurſion, we one " morning, on the ſkirts of the wood, fell in " with three troops belonging to the holy " brotherhood, who ſeemed waiting in order " to attack us. As we perceived only one of

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" the three at first, we despised it, though more
" numerous than our company, and attacked
" it accordingly; but while we were engaged
" with this, the other two, which had found
" means hitherto to keep themselves conceal-
" ed, rushed upon us so suddenly, that our
" valour was of little or no service, and we
" were under a necessity of yielding to the
" numbers of the foe. Our lieutenant and
" two of our men fell on the field, while the
" two that remained and I were so hemmed
" in and overpowered that we were taken pri-
" soners; and while two of their troops con-
" ducted us to Leon, the third went and de-
" stroyed our retreat, which had been disco-
" vered as follows; a peasant of Luceno cros-
" sing the forest in his return home, perceived
" by accident the trap-door of our cavern
" lifted up, that very day on which thou
" madest thy escape with the lady; and sus-
" pecting that it was the place of our abode,
" had not courage to go in, but contented
" himself with taking a good observation of
" the place, which the better to mark, he
" cut off, with his knife, thin slices of bark
" from the trees at small distances as he went
" along, until he had got quite out of the
" wood; then, repairing to Leon, imparted
" his discovery to the corregidor, who receiv-
" ing it with so much the more joy, as his son
" had been robbed by our company, assem-
" bled three troops in order to apprehend us,
" and the peasant was their guide.

" My

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" My arrival furniſhed a ſhow for all the in-
" habitants of Leon: had I been a Portugueſe
" general made priſoner of war, the people
" could not have been more eager to ſee me.
' Behold (ſaid they) behold the famous captain
' who was the terror of this country: and who
' with his two comrades, deſerve to have his
' fleſh torn from his bones with red-hot pin-
' cers.'—" Being carried before the corregidor,
" he began to inſult me, ſaying, ' Well, miſe-
' rable wretch! heaven, wearied with the diſ-
' orders of thy life, at laſt reſigns thee to my
' juſtice.'—" Sir (replied I) if my crimes are
" manifold, at leaſt, I cannot reproach my-
" ſelf with the death of your only ſon, whoſe
" life I preſerved, for which you owe me ſome
" acknowledgement.'—' Ah, miſcreant! (cried
' he) people of thy character are not intitled
' to the priviliges of honour: and even if I
' had a mind to ſave thy life, the duty of my
' office would not allow me.'—" Having ſpoke
" to me in this manner, he ordered us to be
" impriſoned in a dungeon, where he did not
" let my companions linger long; for they
" went out, in three days, to act their laſt tra-
" gical ſcene in the market-place. As for me,
" I remained three whole weeks in jail, ima-
" gining that my puniſhment was deferred in
" order to make it more terrible; and was in
" expectation of a death altogether new; when
" the corregidor, ordering me to be brought into
" his preſence, ſaid, ' Liſten to thy ſentence.—

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'Thou art free. Had it not been for thee, 'my only ſon would have been murthered on 'the highway. As a father I was willing to 'acknowledge this piece of ſervice, but not 'having it in my power to acquit thee as a 'judge, I have written to court in thy behalf, 'ſollicited thy pardon, and obtained it. Thou 'mayeſt go then whither thou ſhalt pleaſe: 'but (added he) take my advice, reflect ſe-'rioufly on thy ill ſpent life, and from hence-'forth quit the profeſſion of robbery.'

"I was deeply affected with theſe words, and "took the road to Madrid, reſolving to turn "over a new leaf, and live honeſtly in that city. "I found my parents were dead, and their ef-"fects in the hands of an old relation, who "gave me ſuch a faithful account of them, as "guardians commonly do; all that I have been "able to touch being no more than three thou-"ſand ducats, which, in all probability, is not "above one fourth of what is my due. But "what courſe could I take? I ſhould gain no-"thing by going to law; therefore, to avoid "idleneſs, I have purchaſed the place of an "alguazil. My brethren, out of decency, "would have oppoſed my admiſſion, had "they been acquainted with my ſtory, which "luckily they were ignorant of, or pretended "to be ſo, which is the ſame thing; for in that "honourable corps it is the buſineſs of every in-"dividual to conceal his own exploits: thank "heaven!

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" heaven! not one of us can juſtly reproach " his fellow: ſo that it may be ſaid of the " fraternity, the devil may take the beſt. " Nevertheleſs, my friend (added Rolando) " I will now diſcloſe the bottom of my ſoul: " the profeſſion which I have embraced is " not at all to my liking; it requires a beha- " viour too delicate and myſterious for me; " and whatever tricks we practiſe muſt be " very crafty and ſecret. O how I regret my " old profeſſion! I grant, there is more ſafety " in this new employment; but there was " more pleaſure in the other, and liberty is " my delight. In all likelihood I ſhall get " rid of my office, and ſet out one morning " for the mountains at the ſource of the river " Tagus, where I know there is a retreat in- " habited by a numerous company, chiefly " of Catlonians (that is making their eulo- " gium in one word;) if thou wilt accompany " me, we will go and increaſe the number of " theſe great men: I ſhall be ſecond captain " in their company, and will, for thy better " reception, aſſure them that I have ſeen thee " ten times engaged by my ſide; I will extol " thy valour to the ſkies, and ſay more in thy " praiſe than a general ſays of an officer " whom he wants to promote. I will take " care not to mention a word of the trick " thou haſt played, becauſe it would make " them ſuſpicious of thee: the adventure ſhall " therefore be concealed. Well (added he)

" art

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" art thou ready to follow my fortune? I " wait for thy reply."

" So many men, ſo many minds (ſaid I to " Rolando) you are born for hardy deeds, and " I for a quiet and eaſy life."—" Oh! I un- " derſtand you (cried he, interrupting me) " the lady whom love perſuaded you to reſcue " ſtill keeps poſſeſſion of your heart, and " doubtleſs you lead a happy life with her in " Madrid: confeſs, Mr. Gil Blas, that you " have taken lodgings for her, and ſpend to- " gether the piſtoles which you carried off " from the ſubterranean retreat." I told him that he was miſtaken, and that, in order to undeceive him, I would, while we ſhould be at dinner, relate the ſtory of the lady: this I did accordingly, and informed him of all that had happened to me ſince I quitted the company. Towards the end of our repaſt, he reſumed the ſubject of the Catalonians, owned that he was determined to join them, and made a new attempt to engage me in the ſame reſolution: But finding that I was not to be perſuaded, he darted a fierce look at me, ſaying in a very ſerious tone, " Since thou " haſt ſuch a groveling ſoul as to prefer thy " ſervile condition to the honour of aſſociat- " ing with men of courage, I abandon thee " to the baſeneſs of thy inclination: but liſten " to the words I am about to pronounce, " and let them remain engraven on thy me- " mory: forget that thou haſt met me to-day, " and never talk of me from henceforth: for

" if

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" if ever I ſhall hear that thou ſo much as " nameſt me in converſation—thou knoweſt " me—I will ſay no more." Having thus expreſſed himſelf, he called to pay, diſcharged the bill, and we got up in order to part.

CHAP. III.

He is diſmiſſed by Don Bernard de Caſtel Blazo and enters into the ſervice of a beau.

AS we went out of the tavern, and were taking leave of one another, my maſter happening to paſs, ſaw me, and I perceived, looked hard at the captain, which made me believe that he was ſurpriſed to find me acquainted with ſuch a figure. Certain it is, that the appearance of Rolando could not prepoſſeſs people in his favour: for he was a very tall fellow, with a long viſage and hook noſe; and though not ugly, had very much the air of a rank ſharper.

I was not deceived in my conjectures; for in the evening, I found Don Bernard ſtill harping on the captain's figure, and extremely well diſpoſed to believe all the fine things I could have ſaid of him, had not my mouth been ſhut. " Gil Blas (ſaid he) who is that " tall ſponger in whoſe company I ſaw thee " to day?" I replied, " he is an alguazil;" and thought he would reſt ſatisfied with that anſwer: but he aſked a great many other queſtions; and as I appeared embarraſſed, becauſe I remembered the threat of Rolando, he broke off the

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the converſation abruptly, and went to bed. Next morning when I had done my duty as uſual, inſtead of ſix rials, he gave me as many ducats; ſaying, Hold, my friend, here is "what I give thee for having ſerved me hi-"therto: go, and ſeek for another place, for "I cannot put up with a ſervant who has ſuch "honourable acquaintances." I took it in my head to pretend, in my own juſtification, that my acquaintance with the alguazil was occaſioned by my having preſcribed for him while I practiſed phyſick at Valladolid. "Very well, "(replied my maſter) that is an ingenious eva-"ſion: but thou ſhouldſt have thought of it "laſt night, and not have been ſo much diſ-"concerted."—"Sir (added I) I thought it "would be imprudent in me to tell it: and "that was the cauſe of my confuſion."—"O! "ſurely (replied he clapping my ſhoulders "gently) you have been very prudent; I did "not think thou hadſt been ſo cunning. Go, "child, I have no further occaſion for thee."

I went inſtantly to inform Melendez of this piece of bad news, who told me for my conſolation, that he intended to introduce me into a better family: and accordingly a few days after, "Gil Blas, my friend (ſaid he) you "don't know what good news I have to tell "you; you are going to enjoy the moſt "agreeable poſt you could deſire; for I will "ſettle you with Don Matthias de Silva, a man "of the firſt quality, and one of thoſe young "lords who go under the denomination of "beaus:

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" beaus: he does me the honour to buy cloth " of me, on truſt, indeed; but there is no- " thing to be loſt by people of his rank; for " they commonly marry rich heireſſes, who " pay their debts: and even if that ſhould " not happen, a tradeſman who underſtands " his buſineſs, ſells always ſo dear that he can " afford to loſe three fourths of his bargain. " The ſteward of Don Matthias is my parti- " cular friend. Let us go to him now; he " will himſelf preſent you to his maſter; and " you may depend upon it, he will, for my " ſake, treat you with uncommon regard.'

In our way to the houſe of Don Matthias, the merchant ſaid, " It will not be amiſs, I " believe, to give you ſome information of " the character of this ſteward, whoſe name " is Gregorio Rodriguez. Between you and " me, he is a man of no family, who, finding " himſelf born for buſineſs, followed the bent " of his genius, and enriched himſelf with " the pillage of two families which he ſerved " in quality of ſteward. I aſſure you he has " a great deal of vanity, and loves to ſee the " reſt of the ſervants cringe to him. They " muſt addreſs themſelves firſt to him, when " they have the leaſt favour to aſk of their " maſter, for ſhould it happen that they ob- " tain it without his intereſt, he has always " expedients in readineſs by which it will " either be revoked or rendered ineffectual. " Remember this, Gil Blas, is the regulation " of your conduct: pay your court to Signor " Rodriguez,

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" Rodriguez, preferable to your maſter him-
" ſelf, and do all that lies in your power to
" pleaſe him: his friendſhip will beſtead you
" much: he will pay your wages punctually;
" and if you are dexterous enough to acquire
" his confidence, he may give you ſome pret-
" ty bone to pick, out of the number he has
" in his poſſeſſion. Don Matthias is a young
" lord who minds nothing but his pleaſure,
" and would not for the world inform him-
" ſelf of the ſtate of his own affairs. What
" a glorious family is that for a ſteward."

Arriving at the houſe, we deſired to ſpeak with Signor Rodriguez, who, we were told, was in his own apartment; there we found him with a kind of farmer, who had a blue canvas bag of money in his hand. The ſteward who looked more pale and yellow than a girl oppreſſed with her maidenhead, came towards Melendez with open arms; he, on the other hand, met him in the ſame manner, and they embraced one another with demonſtrations of friendſhip, in which there was, at leaſt, as much art as nature. Then my affair coming on the carpet, Rodriguez examined me from head to foot, and told me in a very polite manner, that I was juſt ſuch an one as Don Matthias wanted, and that he would with pleaſure preſent me to that lord. Upon which, Melendez letting him know how much he was intereſted in my behalf, and begging that he would favour me with his protection, committed me to his care, and, after

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after abundance of compliments, withdrew. He was no ſooner gone than Rodriguez ſaid to me, "I will conduct you to my maſter as ſoon "as I can diſpatch this honeſt countryman." Then going to the peaſant, and taking hold of the bag, "Talego (ſaid he;) let us ſee if "there be juſt 500 piſtoles here." Having counted the money and found it right, he gave the farmer a diſcharge for the ſum, and ſent him about his buſineſs; and putting the piſtoles into the bag again, addreſſed himſelf to me, ſaying, "This is the right time for us "to go to the levee of my maſter, who com-"monly riſes about noon. It is near the hour, "and I ſuppoſe he is up."

This was the caſe; we found Don Matthias in his morning-gown, lolling in an eaſy chair, over an arm of which he had tilted one of his legs, and poiſed himſelf by leaning with his body the other way, and raſping tobacco, while he talked to a footman, who for the preſent did the duty of his valet de chambre. My lord (ſaid the ſteward to him) here is a young man whom I take the liberty to preſent as one fit to fill the place of the valet whom you diſmiſſed two days ago: Melendez your draper reccommends him, aſſuring me that he is a lad of merit, and I hope your lordſhip will be very well ſatisfied with his behaviour. "Enough, "(anſwered the young lord) ſince you intro-"duce him to me, I receive him into my ſervice "with implicit faith, and make him my valet "de chambre. So, that affair is ſettled: but "Rodri-

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" Rodriguez (added he) let us talk of ſome-
" thing elſe: you are come very opportunely;
" for I was juſt going to ſend for you. I have
" bad news to tell you, my dear Rodriguez!
" You muſt know I had ill luck at play laſt
" night. Together with an hundred piſtoles
" which I had about me, I have loſt two hun-
" dred more on my parole; and you know of
" what importance it is for people of quality to
" diſcharge that ſort of debts; it is indeed the
" only kind which we are obliged in point of
" honour to pay; and we do not give ourſelves
" much concern about the reſt; you muſt
" therefore find two hundred piſtoles immedi-
" ately, and ſend them to the counteſs of Pe-
" droſa."—" Sir (ſaid the ſteward) it is ſooner
" ſaid than done. Where ſhall I get that ſum
" to pleaſe you? I have not been able to fin-
" ger one farthing of your tenants, let me
" threaten as hard as I can; and yet I am
" obliged to maintain your family in an ho-
" nourable way, though I ſweat blood and wa-
" ter in procuring wherewithall to defray the
" expence. True, indeed, I have hitherto,
" thank heaven! made ſhift; but I am now
" reduced to ſuch extremity that I know not
" what ſaint in heaven to invoke."—" All
" theſe harangues are uſeleſs (cried Don Mat-
" thias interrupting him) and you worry me
" with your reflections. Don't you imagine,
" Rodriguez, that I will change my diſpoſi-
" tion, and divert myſelf with looking into my
" own affairs. An agreeable amuſement, truly,
" for

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" for a man of pleaſure like me!"—" Have a " little patience (replied the ſteward) at the " rate you go on, I foreſee that you will be rid " of that care in a very ſhort time."—" You " fatigue me (ſaid the young lord in a paſſion) " you murder me.—Give me leave to ruin my- " ſelf imperceptibly; I tell you I want two " hundred piſtoles: and I muſt have them." " I'll go then (ſaid Rodriguez) and have re- " courſe to the little old man who has already " lent you money at high intereſt."—" You " may if you pleaſe have recourſe to the devil; " (anſwered Don Matthias) provided I have " the two hundred piſtoles, I ſhall give my- " ſelf no further trouble about the matter."

Juſt as he had pronounced theſe words in a haſty and diſcontented manner, the ſteward went away, and a young man of quality, called Don Antonio Centelles, came in. " What is " the matter? (ſaid this laſt to my maſter) " thou art cloudy, my friend: I perceive in- " dignation in thy countenance. What can " have put you into this bad humour? I'll " lay a wager, it was the man whom I met " going out."—" Yes (replied Don Matthias) " it was my ſteward: every time he comes " to ſpeak with me, I ſuffer for one quarter " of an hour, by his talking about my affairs, " and ſaying that I have quite exhauſted my " finances. Impertinent beaſt! he cannot ſay " that he loſes by me, I am ſure."—" Why, " child (ſaid Don Antonio) I am in the ſame " condition; having a factor not a whit more

" reaſon-

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" reaſonable than thy ſteward: When the " rogue, in obedience to my repeated orders, " brings money for me, one would think he " gave it out of his own pocket. He over- " whelms me with reflections. 'Sir (ſays " he) you are undone, your rents are ſeized.'— " Upon which I am obliged to cut him ſhort, " in order to put an end to his ridiculous diſ- " courſe."—"The misfortune is (ſaid Don Mat- " thias) we cannot live without theſe people, " who are neceſſary evils."—" They are ſo, " (replied Centelles) but harkee (added he " laughing with all his might) there is a comi- " cal thought come into my head: a moſt in- " comparable conception! by which we may " convert thoſe ſcenes which we have with " them into mirth; and divert ourſelves with " that which now gives us ſo much uneaſineſs. " Let me demand of thy ſteward all the mo- " ney thou ſhalt have occaſion for; while " thou doſt the ſame by my manager; then " they may moralize as they pleaſe, we can " hear them with great compoſure; becauſe " thy ſteward will ſhow me thy accounts, and " my factor will entertain thee with mine. I " ſhall hear of nothing but thy profuſion, and " thou wilt ſee nothing but mine. This will " be admirable ſport."

A thouſand bright ſtrokes ſucceeded this ſally, and mightily diverted the young lords, who converſed together with a great deal of vivacity, until their diſcourſe was interrupted by Gregorio Rodriguez, who returned with a little

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little old man, almoſt quite bald. Don Antonio would have gone away, ſaying, " Adieu, " Don Matthias, I ſhall ſee you by and by: " at preſent, you have, doubtleſs, ſome ſerious " affair to diſcuſs with theſe gentlemen."—"O! " not at all (replied my maſter) ſtay, it is no " ſecret. That diſcreet old perſon whom you " ſee is an honeſt man, who lends me money " at the rate of twenty per cent."—" How! " twenty per cent. (cried Centelles, with an " air of aſtoniſhment) Egad, I congratulate " thee upon being in ſuch good hands! I am " not ſo kindly dealt with, and may ſay that " I purchaſe ſilver at the price of gold; I " commonly borrow at the rate of forty in the " hundred."——" Heavens! what extortion " (exclaimed the old uſurer) do theſe knaves " ever think of another world? I am not at " all ſurpriſed at the hue and cry raiſed againſt " people who lend upon intereſt; it is the " exorbitant profit which ſome exact that ruins " our honour and reputation. If all my brethren we like me, we ſhould not be ſo " much reviled: for my ſole view in lending " is to befriend my fellow creatures. Ah! " if times were as they have been, I would " offer you my purſe without intereſt: and " truly, in ſpite of the preſent ſcarcity I can " hardly prevail upon myſelf to take twenty " per cent. But for my part, I believe mo- " ney has retired again within the bowels of " the earth: there is no ſuch thing to be had;

" for

" for which reaſon I am obliged to retrench " my benevolence."

" How much do you want?" added he, addreſſing himſelf to my maſter. " I muſt have " two hundred piſtoles," replied Don Mat- " thias. " Here are four hundred in a bag (ſaid the uſurer) you ſhall have one half." So ſaying, he pulled from under his cloak a blue bag, which ſeemed to be the very ſame which the peaſant Talego had left with the five hundred piſtoles in the hands of Rodriguez. I ſoon knew what to think of the matter, and found that Matthias had not praiſed the ſteward's underſtanding without cauſe. The old man having emptied the bag on the table, began to count the money; my maſter was inflamed with deſire of poſſeſſion at the ſight; and ſtruck with the totality of the ſum, ſaid to the uſurer, " Signor Deſcomulgado, I " have made a very wiſe reflection, truly! " What a fool I am! to borrow no more than " what is abſolutely neceſſary to diſengage " my parole, without conſidering that I have " not a penny in my purſe. I ſhall be obliged " to have recourſe to you to-morrow; there- " fore, to ſpare you the trouble of coming " back, I think it will not be amiſs to pocket " the whole four hundred."—" My lord, " (ſaid the uſurer) a part of this money was " deſigned for a good licentiate, who has ſome " fat benefices, which he charitably employs in " perſuading young girls to retire from the " world, and in furniſhing their retreats. But

" ſince

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" ſince you have occaſion for the whole ſum, " it is at your ſervice: all that I deſire is ſuf- " ficient ſecurity."—" Oh! as for ſecurity, " (ſaid Rodriguez interrupting him, and tak- " ing a paper out of his pocket) you ſhall be " ſatisfied; here is an order to be ſigned by " Don Matthias, for five hundred piſtoles, " upon one of his tenants, called Talego, a " rich farmer of Mondejan."—" Very well " (replied the uſurer) I never make many " words." Upon which the ſteward preſented a pen to his maſter, who, without reading the order, ſet his name to the bottom, whiſtling all the while.

This affair being ended, the old man took his leave of my patron, who ran and embraced him, ſaying, " Till our next meeting, Si- " gnor uſurer, I am wholly your's: I don't " know why people of your profeſſion are " branded with the name of rogues: for my " own part, I think you are very neceſſary " and ſerviceable to ſociety: you are the con- " ſolation of a thouſand heirs, and the re- " ſource of all thoſe lords whoſe expence ex- " ceeds their income."—" Thou art in the " right (cried Centelles) uſurers are very ho- " neſt people, whom we never can honour " enough: I will, in my turn, embrace this " gentleman, on account of his twenty per " cent." With theſe words, he approached and hugged the old man; and theſe two beaus, for their diverſion, began to puſh him backward and forward one to another, like a ball

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between two tennis-players. After he had been toſſed to and fro a good while, they let him go with the ſteward, who was more deſerving than he of their embraces, and of ſomething elſe alſo.

Rodriguez and his underſtrapper being gone, Don Matthias ſent the half of his piſtoles to the Counteſs of Pedroſa, by the footman who was preſent, and ſecured the reſt in a long, embroidered, ſilk purſe, which he commonly wore in his pocket. Very well ſatisfied in ſeeing himſelf in caſh, he ſaid to Don Antonio, with a gay air, "What ſhall "we do to-day? Let us conſult about it." "You ſpeak like a ſenſible man (replied Cen- "telles) with all my heart, let us deliberate." While they were conſidering how to ſpend the day, two other lords arrived: theſe were Don Alexo Segiar and Don Fernando de Gamboa, both of them about the age of my maſter, that is, between eight and twenty and thirty. Theſe four cavaliers, at meeting, hugged one another ſo heartily, that one would have thought they had not met for ten years before; then Don Fernando, who was a jovial companion, addreſſing himſelf to Don Matthias and Don Antonio, ſaid, "Gentlemen, where do "you intend to dine to-day? If you are not "engaged, I'll conduct you to a tavern where "you ſhall drink nectar. I ſupped there laſt "night, and left it only this morning, be- "tween five and ſix o'clock."—"Would to "heaven (cried my maſter) that I had done "the

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" the ſame: in which caſe, I ſhould not have " loſt my money."

" As for me (ſaid Centelles) I treated my- " ſelf laſt night with a new diverſion; for I " love variety in my pleaſures, which alone " makes life agreeable. A friend of mine " carried me to the houſe of a farmer of the " revenue, a gentleman who does his own buſineſs together with that of the ſtate. " There I ſaw magnificence and taſte, the en- " tertainment being elegant enough. But I " was mightily diverted wtth the ridiculous " behaviour of the tax-gatherer himſelf, who, " though the moſt plebeian of his claſs, aſ- " ſumed the man of quality: and his wife, " though horribly ugly, affected the airs of " a beauty, and ſaid a thouſand ſilly things, " ſeaſoned with the Biſcayan accent, which " rendered them ſtill more remarkably fooliſh. " Beſides there were at table, four or five chil- " dren, with their tutor; ſo that you may " eaſily conceive how I was diverted with this " family ſupper."

" And I, gentlemen (ſaid Don Alexo Se- " giar) ſupped at the houſe of Arſenia the " actreſs. We were ſix in all; Arſenia, Flo- " rimonda, with a coquette of her acquaint- " ance, the Marquis of Zeneta, Don Juan of " Moncada, and your humble ſervant. We " ſpent the night in drinking and ſpeaking " bawdy. Heavens! what pleaſure! 'Tis true, " indeed, Arſenia and Florimonda have not " much genius, but their wantonneſs ſupplies

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" the place of wit. They are merry, briſk,
" romping creatures, and I love them a thou-
" ſand times better than your preciſe women
" of ſenſe."

CHAP. IV.

How Gil Blas became acquainted with the valets of the beaus—The admirable ſecret they imparted to him of acquiring the reputation of a man of wit, at a ſmall expence; and the ſingular oath which they oblige him to take.

IN this manner did theſe lords continue the converſation, until Don Matthias, whom, in the mean time, I helped to dreſs, was ready to go abroad. Then he bad me follow him, and all the beaus together ſet out for the tavern, to which Don Fernando de Gamboa had propoſed to conduct them. As I walked in the rear, in company with three other valets (for each of the cavaliers had one) I obſerved, not without wonder, that theſe three domeſtics copied the air and manner of their reſpective maſters. Having ſaluted them as their new comrade, they returned the civility, and one among them, after having obſerved me ſome minutes, ſaid, " Brother, I perceive that you have ne-
" ver as yet ſerved a young lord."—" No,
" indeed (anſwered I) it is not long ſince I
" came to Madrid."—" So I ſuppoſed (repli-
" ed he) you ſmell ſtrong of the country: you
" ſeem timorous and aukward, and there is a
" ſtiffneſs in your behaviour: but, no matter,
" we

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" we will ſoon poliſh you, take my word."
" I am afraid you flatter me (ſaid I to him.)"
" Not at all (he replied) if you was the great-
" eſt blockhead in the univerſe, we ſhall be
" able to make you paſs, you may depend
" upon it."

This was enough to make me underſtand that my confederates were brave lads, and that I could not be in better hands, in order to become a pretty fellow. When we arrived at the tavern, we found an entertainment ready, which Signor Don Fernando had the precaution to beſpeak in the morning; our maſters ſat down to table, and we ſtood ready to ſerve them: then they began to talk with ſuch gaiety, that I was delighted to hear them. I was very much diverted with their different characters, thoughts, and expreſſions: their fire! their ſallies of imagination, made me believe them a new ſpecies of men! When the deſſert was upon the table, we brought in a great number of bottles of the beſt Spaniſh wine; and left them, to go and dine by ourſelves, in a little hall where the cloth was laid on purpoſe.

I ſoon perceived that the knights my companions, had more merit than I at firſt imagined: they not only aſſumed the manners of their maſters, but even affected their very language; and theſe raſcals ſucceeded ſo well, that (the quality are accepted) there was no difference: I admired their free and eaſy deportment; was charmed with their wit, and deſpaired

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ſpaired of ever being ſo agreeable. The valet of Don Fernando (becauſe his maſter treated our's) performed the honours of the banquet; and that nothing might be wanting, called the landlord, ſaying, "Maſter Andrew Mantuano, give us ten bottles of your very beſt wine, and, according to cuſtom, add them to my maſter's bill."—"With all my heart (replied the landlord) but, Mr. Gaſpard, you know that Signor Don Fernando owes me a good many entertainments already: and if by your means I could touch a little money." —Oh! (ſaid the valet, interrupting him) give yourſelf no trouble about what he owes you: I'll anſwer for it: my maſter's debts are as good as gold: 'tis true indeed, ſome unmannerly creditors have ſeized our rents; but we ſhall obtain a replevy very ſoon; and then we ſhall diſcharge our bill without ſo much as examining the articles." Mantuano brought the wine, notwithſtanding the rents being ſeized: and we drank it in expectation of the replevy. It was a good jeſt to ſee us, every moment, toaſting one another, under the ſurnames of our maſters: Don Antonio's valet giving the name of Gamboa to Don Fernando's ſervant, and Don Fernando's footman honouring Don Antonio's valet with that of Centelles: they called me Silva, and by degrees, we got as drunk under thoſe borrowed names as our maſters to whom they properly belonged.

Though

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Though I did not ſhine ſo much as my companions, they did not fail to expreſs their approbation of me. "Silva (ſaid one of the "archeſt among them) we ſhall make ſome-"thing of thee, my friend: I perceive thou "haſt a fund of genius, but does not know "how to uſe it to advantage. The fear of "ſpeaking nonſenſe hinders thee from talking "at a venture; and yet, by this alone, a "thouſand people now-a-days acquire the re-"putation of wits. If thou haſt a mind to "ſhine, give the rein to thy vivacity, and "indifferently riſk every thing that comes "uppermoſt.—Thy blunders will paſs for a "noble boldneſs: and if, after having uttered "a thouſand impertinences, one witticiſm eſ-"capes thee, the ſilly things will be forgot, "the lucky thought will be remembered, and "the world will conceive an high opinion of "thy merit. This is what our maſters prac-"tiſe with ſuch ſucceſs; and what every man "muſt do, who aſpires to the reputation of a "diſtinguiſhed wit."

Beſides that I was but too fond of paſſing for a fine genius, the ſecret which he had diſcloſed to me ſeemed ſo eaſy, that I was reſolved not to neglect it. I put it inſtantly to the proof, and the wine I had drank contributed to its ſucceſs; that is, I ſpoke at random, and had the good fortune to throw out, among a great deal of nonſence, ſome flaſhes of wit, by which I acquired great applauſe. This *coup d'eſſai* filled me with confidence: I

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collected all my vivacity to produce some bright ſally, and chance befriended me in the attempt.

"Well (ſaid he who ſpoke to me in the "ſtreet) don't you begin to get rid of your "ruſt? Thou haſt not been two hours in our "company, and art already quite another "man. Thou wilt improve viſibly every day. "See what it is to ſerve people of quality: "it elevates the mind; while the being valet "to citizens has a quite contrary effect."— "Doubtleſs (anſwered I) and therefore I will "henceforth conſecrate my ſervice to the no-"bility."—"That's nobly ſaid (cried Don "Fernando's valet, half-ſeas over) it does not "belong to your citizens to poſſeſs ſuch ſupe-"rior geniuſes as we are. Come therefore, "gentlemen (added he) let us take an oath "never to ſerve ſuch rapſcallions, and ſwear "to it by the river Styx." We laughed heartily at Gaſpard's conceit, which we approved of very much, and took the burleſque oath with our glaſſes in our hands.

Thus we continued at table until our maſters were pleaſed to retire, which was about midnight; a circumſtance which my companions looked upon as an exceſs of ſobriety. 'Tis true, indeed, theſe young lords left the tavern in ſuch good time, only with a view to viſit a famous coquette, who lived at the court-end of the town, and kept open houſe for young men of pleaſure by night as well as by day. She was between thirty and forty years old, ſtill extremely

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extremely handſome, agreeable, and ſo conſummate in the art of pleaſing, that (it was ſaid) ſhe ſold the remains of her beauty at a higher price than that which ſhe had received for its firſt-fruits. There were always in her houſe two or three other courtezans of the firſt rank, who contributed not a little to the great concourſe of lords who frequented it. They went to play in the afternoon, then ſupped, and ſpent the night in drinking and making merry. Here our maſters ſtaid till morning, and we alſo, without feeling the time lie heavy on our hands; for while they diverted themſelves with the miſtreſſes, we amuſed ourſelves with the maids, and at laſt departed all together at break of day, every one going to bed at his own home.

My maſter, getting up as uſual about noon, dreſſed himſelf, and went out. I followed him to the houſe of Don Antonio Centelles, where we found one Don Alvaro de Acunha, an old gentleman, and profeſſed rake. All the young ſparks, who had an ambition to become fine gentlemen, put themſelves under his tuition; by which they were formed for pleaſure, taught to make a figure in the world, and to ſpend their fortunes with a good grace, he himſelf being under no apprehenſion of ſquandering away his own, which was gone long ago. The three cavaliers having ſaluted one another, Centelles ſaid to my maſter, "Faith, "Don Matthias, thou couldſt not come at "a better time; Don Alvaro is going to carry

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" me to the houſe of a citizen, who has in-
" vited the Marquis of Zeneta and Don Juan
" de Moncada to dinner, and thou ſhalt be
" of the party."—" What is the name of this
" citizen?" (ſaid Don Matthias)—" He is
" called Gregorio de Noriega (replied Don
" Alvaro) and I will, in two words, give
" you a character of the man. His farther,
" who is a rich jeweller, having gone abroad
" to negociate his affairs, left him the enjoy-
" ment of a large income; but Gregorio is a
" fool, who has a diſpoſition prone to ſpend
" his eſtate, in doing which he affects the
" beau, and would fain paſs for a man of ſpi-
" rit, in ſpite of nature. As he begged me
" to take him under my direction, I govern
" him at preſent: and I can aſſure you, gen-
" tlemen, he is in a fair way; his finances be-
" ing already pretty well ſunk."—" I don't
" at all doubt it (cried Centelles:) I ſee him
" already at the work-houſe. Come, Don
" Matthias, let us make an acquaintance with
" him, that we may have ſome ſhare in his
" ruin."—" With all my heart (replied my
" maſter) I love dearly to ſee the fortune of
" theſe little upſtart gentlemen overturned,
" becauſe they vainly pretend to rival us in
" ſplendor. Nothing, for example, ever gave
" me ſo much diverſion as the misfortune of
" that publican's ſon, who was, by his incli-
" nation for play, and his vanity in aping the
" great, obliged to ſell all, to his very houſe."
" Oh! as for him (ſaid Don Antonio) he de-
" ſerves

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" ſerves no compaſſion; for he is as great a " coxcomb in his adverſity as he was in high " life."

Centelles and my maſter repairing with Don Alvaro to the houſe of Gregorio de Noriega, Mogicon and I went thither alſo, both of us raviſhed to find a feaſt going forward, and to have an opportunity of contributing, on our parts, to the ruin of a citizen. As we went in, we perceived ſeveral people buſy in dreſſing the dinner; and the ragouts they were preparing ſent forth a ſavory ſteam, that very much prepoſſeſſed the ſmell in favour of the taſte. The Marquis of Zeneta and Don Juan de Moncada arrived, and the entertainer ſeemed to be a great booby, who attempted in vain to aſſume the carriage of a beau, being a very bad copy of theſe excellent originals; or rather a downright ſimpleton, who affected an air of underſtanding. Imagine to yourſelf a man of this character in the midſt of five jokers, whoſe ſole aim was to exerciſe their raillery upon him, and engage him in unſupportable expence. " Gentlemen (ſaid Don Alvaro, after the firſt " compliments) I preſent to you Signor Gre- " gorio de Noriega, as a complete cavalier. " Beſides a thouſand other excellent qualifica- " tions, he poſſeſſes an underſtanding ſo ex- " quiſitely cultivated, that you cannot take " him amiſs. He is equally ſtrong on all ſub- " jects, from the moſt cloſe and ſubtle logic " down to the art of ſpelling."—" Oh! now " you flatter me (ſaid the citizen, interrupt-

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" ing him with a very fooliſh laugh.) Si-
" gnor Alvaro, I may with more juſtice return
" the compliment; for you are, as one may
" ſay, a very draw-well of erudition-"—" I
" had no deſign (replied Don Alvaro) to fiſh
" for ſuch a genteel rapartee; but upon my
" word, gentlemen, Signor Gregorio cannot
" fail of acquiring great reputation in the
" world."—" For my own part (ſaid Don
" Antonio) what I am moſt charmed with,
" and what I greatly prefer to his knowledge
" in orthography is the judicious choice he
" makes of his company: inſtead of confin-
" ing himſelf to the converſation of citizens,
" he cultivntes acquaintance with none but
" young lords, without giving himſelf any
" trouble about the expence attending it.
" There is in this conduct an elevation of ſen-
" timent, and it may be called ſpending one's
" money with taſte and diſcernment."

Theſe ironical praiſes were followed by a thouſand more of the ſame ſort, and poor Gregorio was ſpared by none of them; each of the beaus, in his turn, breaking his jeſt, the meaning of which the fool did not perceive. On the contrary, he took every thing in a literal ſenſe, and appeared very happy in his gueſts; nay, he ſeemed even pleaſed with being turned into ridicule: and, in ſhort, ſerved them as a butt during the whole time of dinner. They ſtaid with him the remaining part of the day, and all night long; whilſt we drank at diſcretion as well as our maſters; and

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by the time they took leave of the citizen, we were all in an excellent trim.

CHAP. V.

Gil Blas ſets up for a man of gallantry, and becomes acquainted with a fine lady.

AFTER having refreſhed myſelf with ſome hours of ſleep, I got up in good humour; and remembered the advice I had received from Melendez, went (my maſter not being yet awake) and preſented my reſpects to the ſteward, whoſe vanity ſeemed not a little flattered with this inſtance of my regard. He received me very graciouſly, and aſked if I was not yet familiarized to the way of living practiſed among young noblemen. I replied, that though it was quite new to me as yet, I did not deſpair of being reconciled to it in time.

And truly this happened very ſoon; for my humour and diſpoſition ſuffered a thorough change. From being ſedate and penſive, I became a briſk, blundering coxcomb; and the valet of Don Antonio complimented me on my metamorphoſis, ſaying, that there was now nothing wanting to make me illuſtrious, but an intrigue; which, he affirmed, was abſolutely neceſſary towards finiſhing the character of a pretty fellow, all our comrades being beloved by ſome fair lady, and he alone being in poſſeſſion of the good graces of no leſs than two women of quality. I believed the rogue told a lye, and ſaid to him, "Monſieur Mo-

"gicon;

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" gicon, to be ſure you are a handſome young " fellow, who have a great deal of wit and " merit; but I cannot conceive how ladies of " quality (eſpecially as you don't live among " ſuch) can allow themſelves to be charmed " by a man of your condition."—" Why tru- " ly (ſaid he) they don't know who I am.—I " make all my conqueſts in the dreſs, and " even in the name of my maſter. I'll tell " you how: I dreſs myſelf like a young no- " bleman; I aſſume his behaviour, and go out " to take the air; I ogle all the women I ſee, " until I meet with one who returns the lear: " her I follow, and find means to ſpeak with. " I call myſelf Don Antonio de Centelles, " and demand an aſſignation, upon which the " lady ſtands upon ceremony: I preſs her to " comply; ſhe yields, *et cætera.*—By this con- " duct, my child (added he) I have ſucceed- " ed in my intrigues, and I adviſe thee to fol- " low my example."

I was too ambitious of making a figure, not to liſten to this advice, and beſides felt no averſion to a love intrigue: I therefore reſolved to diſguiſe myſelf like a young nobleman, and go in queſt of amorous adventures; but as I durſt not dreſs myſelf in our own houſe, for fear of being obſerved, I took a rich ſuit of clothes from my maſter's wardrobe, and, making it up in a bundle, carried it to the houſe of a little barber, a friend of mine, where I thought I could dreſs and undreſs with more convenience. There I adorned myſelf

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ſelf to the beſt of my power, the barber lending a helping hand, in order to ſet me off; and when we imagined it was impoſſible to add any thing to my appearance, I walked towards St. Jerome's meadow; from whence I was perſuaded I ſhould not return without having found ſome intrigue to my liking: but before I was obliged to go ſo far from home, I ſtarted one of a very brilliant expectation.

As I was croſſing a bye-ſtreet, I ſaw a lady richly dreſſed, and perfectly genteel, come out of a ſmall houſe, and get into a hackney-coach that ſtood before the door; upon which, ſtopping ſhort to gaze, I bowed to her in ſuch a manner, as to inform her that I was not at all diſguſted at her appearance; and ſhe, to let me ſee ſhe deſerved my notice ſtill more than I imagined, lifted up her veil for a moment, and preſented a moſt agreeable countenance to my view: mean while the coach drove off, and I remained in the ſtreet, not a little ſtruck with this apparition: "What a "charming figure! (ſaid I to myſelf) Bleſs "me! this is juſt what I wanted to complete "my character. If the two ladies who are "in love with Mogicon, are as handſome as "this, I pronounce him a lucky knave. I "ſhould be charmed with my fate had I "ſuch a miſtreſs."

While I made theſe reflections, I caſt my eyes by accident towards the houſe from whence I had ſeen this lovely creature come out,

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out, and perceived at a parlour-window an old gentlewoman, who beckoned me to come in.

I flew into the houſe in an inſtant, and found, in a pretty handſome parlour, this venerable and diſcreet matron, who, taking me for a marquis at leaſt, ſaluted me with great reſpect, ſaying, "I don't at all doubt, Si-"gnor, that you have conceived a very bad "opinion of a woman, who, without being "acquainted with you, beckons you into her "houſe: but perhaps you will think more "favourably of me, when you ſhall know "that I don't treat every body in the ſame "manner. But you, I ſuppoſe, are a court-"lord."—"You are not miſtaken, my ſoul, "ſaid I, (ſtretching out my right leg, and "poiſing my body on my left hip) I am, "without vanity, of one of the beſt families "in Spain."—"I thought ſo by your ap-"pearance (ſhe replied) and I own I love to "oblige people of quality; that is my foible. "—I obſerved you through the window, "looking very earneſtly (as I ſuppoſe) at a "lady who had juſt parted from me. Have "you a paſſion for her? tell me ſincerely." "Upon the faith of a courtier (anſwered I) "ſhe has captivated me. I never ſaw any "thing more tempting than that creature.— "Bring us together, my good mother, and "depend upon my acknowledgement: ſuch "good offices rendered to us grandees, ſel-"dom paſs unrecompenced."

"I have

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" I have already told you (replied the old " gentlewoman) that I am wholly devoted to " people of quality, and delight in being uſe- " ful to them. I admit into my houſe, for " inſtance, certain ladies, whom the exteriors " of virtue hinder from receiving their gal- " lants at home; therefore I accommodate " them with my houſe, in order to reconcile " the warmth of their complexions with the " rules of decency."—" Very well (ſaid I to " her) and I ſuppoſe you have granted that " favour to the lady in queſtion."—" No, " (ſhe replied) this lady is a young widow of " quality, who wants a lover: but ſhe is ſo " nice in that particular, that I don't know " if you yourſelf will pleaſe her, notwith- " ſtanding your extraordinary merit: I have " already preſented to her three ſtout ca- " valiers, whom ſhe treated with diſdain."— " Adzooks! my dear (cried I, with an air " of aſſurance) thou haſt no more to do, but " to put me on the ſcent. I will give thee a " good account of her, believe me. I long " to have a *tête-à-tête* with a ſhy beauty, hav- " ing never as yet met with one of that cha- " racter."—" Well (ſaid the old lady) if you " come hither to-morrow about this time, " your curioſity may be ſatisfied."—" I will " not fail (anſwered I) and we ſhall ſee whe- " ther or not a young nobleman, ſuch as I, " may taſte the pleaſure of a conqueſt."

I returned to the houſe of the little barber, without deſiring any other adventures, but very

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very impatient to ſee the iſſue of this. Next day, therefore, having been at great pains to ſet myſelf off, I repaired to the old gentlewoman's houſe, an hour before the appointment. "Signor (ſaid ſhe) I ſee you are "punctual, and I am glad of it: for you will "find it well worth your trouble. I have "ſeen your young widow and have had ſome "diſcourſe with her about you. She has for-"bid me to ſpeak; but I have conceived ſuch "a friendſhip for you, that I cannot hold my "tongue. You have had the good fortune "to make an impreſſion on her heart, and "will be happy very ſoon. Between you "and me, the lady is a delicious morſel; her "huſband lived with her but a very ſhort "time; he fleeted away, as it were, like a "ſhadow; ſo that ſhe is as good as a maiden." The good matron, doubtleſs, meant one of thoſe ſprightly maidens, who know how to enjoy life without the incumbrance of matrimony.

In a little time the heroine of the aſſignation arrived in a ſtage-coach, as ſhe had done the day before, adorned with all the pomp of dreſs. As ſoon as ſhe appeared in the hall, I began by five or ſix à-la-mode bows, accompanied with the moſt faſhionable contortions; after which, I approached her with a very familiar air, ſaying, "My princeſs, "behold a young nobleman, who is enwrapt "with your beauty. Your image, ſince yeſ-"terday, has inceſſantly preſented itſelf to "my

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" my imagination, and expelled a ducheſs,
" who had begun to ſet footing in my heart."
" The triumph (anſwered ſhe, taking off her
" veil) is too glorious for me, and yet I do
" not perfectly enjoy it; for you young
" noblemen are prone to change, and your
" hearts, they ſay, are more difficult to keep
" than quickſilver."—" But, my queen (I re-
" plied) let us mind the preſent only, and let
" futurity ſhift for itſelf; you are handſome,
" and I amorous; and, if you approve of
" my paſſion, let us engage without any fur-
" ther reflection, and embark like ſailors, who
" think only of the pleaſures, without per-
" ceiving the perils of their voyage."

So ſaying, I threw myſelf, in a tranſport, at the feet of my nymph, and, the better to imitate the beaus, preſſed her, in a petulant manner, to make me happy. She ſeemed a little moved by my intreaties, but thought it was too ſoon to yield; therefore puſhing me gently from her, " Hold (ſaid ſhe) you are
" too forward and have the air of a liber-
" tine; I am afraid you are no better than a
" downright rake."—" O fye, Madam! (cried
" I) ſure you cannot hate what all ladies of
" faſhion love: none but tradeſmen's wives
" exclaim againſt libertiniſm."—" You are
" certainly in the right (ſhe replied) and I
" cannot reſiſt ſuch a convincing reaſon. It
" is in vain, I find, to uſe grimace with
" noblemen like you; and the women muſt
" advance one half of the way. Know then
" your

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" your victory (added she with an appear-
" ance of confusion, as if her modesty suf-
" fered in the confession) you have inspired
" me with sentiments which I never felt be-
" fore, and I want only to know who you
" are, that I may determine to choose you
" for my lover. I believe, you are a young
" lord, and, moreover, a man of honour.
" But of this I am not assured; and howso-
" ever I may be prepossessed in your favour,
" I am resolved not to bestow my affection on
" a person unknown."

It was then I remembered the expedient of Don Antonio's valet, on the same occasions; and, after his example, having a mind to pass for my master, " Madam, said I (to my wi-
" dow) I will not refuse to tell you my name,
" which I need not be ashamed to own—Did
" you never hear of Don Matthias de Silva?"
" Yes (replied she) I have even seen him at
" the house of a lady, an acquaintance of
" mine." Although I was pretty well stock-ed with impudence, this answer disconcerted me a good deal; however, I recollected my-self in an instant, and making an effort of genius, to extricate myself, " Well, then, my
" angel (said I) you know a lord whom—I
" know also. Since you must have it, I am
" one of the same family; his grandfather
" married my grand-uncle's sister-in-law: so
" that you see we are very nearly related.—
" My name is Don Cæsar, and I am the only
" son of the illustrious Don Fernando de Ribera,

" who

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" who was ſlain fifteen years ago, in a battle " that was fought on the frontiers of Por- " tugal. I could deſcribe the action, which " was helliſhly hot; but that would be loſing " the precious moments which love prompts " us to employ in a more agreeable man- " ner."

After this diſcourſe I became more preſſing and paſſionate: but all to little effect; the favours which my goddeſs beſtowed upon me, only ſerving to make me ſigh after thoſe which ſhe refuſed: but though the barbarous creature got into her coach that waited at the door, I went home very well ſatisfied with my good fortune, although I was not yet perfectly happy. If, ſaid I to myſelf, I have not been able to obtain the heighth of my wiſhes, it is, becauſe my princeſs is a lady of rank and delicacy, who thinks it indecent to yield to my tranſports during the firſt interview. The pride of her birth has retarded my happineſs, which, however, is only delayed for a few days. Not but that I had always ſome ſuſpicions, that the whole affair was a well-concerted trick. But I loved to conſider it in the moſt favourable point of view, and to preſerve the advantageous opinion I had conceived of the lady, with whom I had agreed to meet again next day; the hope of accompliſhing my wiſhes giving me a taſte, by anticipation, of the pleaſures I expected to enjoy.

With

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With my fancy full of theſe ſmiling images, I retuned to the houſe of my barber, where I changed my dreſs, and went to wait upon my maſter at a tennis-court, where I knew he was. I found him engaged in play, and even perceived that he had been lucky; for he was none of thoſe phlegmatic gameſters, who enrich or ruin themſelves, without changing a feature. In his proſperity he was full of inſulting raillery: but very moroſe when fortune declared againſt him. Leaving the tennis-court in great good humour, he went directly to the prince's theatre, and I followed him to the play-houſe door, where giving me a ducat "Here, Gil Blas, (ſaid he) ſince "I have been lucky, thou ſhalt feel the ef- "fects of it; go and enjoy thyſelf with thy "companions, and about midnight come to "me at the houſe of Arſenia, where I am to "ſup with Don Alexo Segiar." So ſaying, he went in, and I remained thinking how I ſhould ſpend my ducat, according to the intention of the donor. I was not long in ſuſpence; Clarino, Don Alexo's valet, appeared all of a ſudden, and I carried him to the next tavern, where we regaled ourſelves till twelve o'clock; and from thence repaired together to the houſe of Arſenia, where he was likewiſe ordered to rendezvous. A little lacquey opened the door, and introduced us into a parlour, where, the waiting-woman of Arſenia and Florimonda ſat together, laughing as if for

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for a wager, while their miſtreſſes entertained our maſters above.

The arrival of two merry fellows, who had ſupped to their ſatisfaction, could not be diſagreeable to chambermaids; eſpecially to thoſe of the actreſſes; but what was my aſtoniſhment, when, in the perſon of one of them, I beheld my widow! my adorable widow, whom I believed a marchioneſs, or counteſs. She ſeemed no leſs ſurpriſed at ſeeing her Don Cæſar de Ribera metamorphoſed into the valet de chambre of a beau: however we obſerved one another without being diſconcerted; and both at one time, were ſeized with ſuch a violent inclination to laugh, that we could not help indulging it. After which, Laura (ſo was my princeſs called) taking me aſide, while Clarino made up to her companion, very graciouſly preſented her hand, ſaying, ſoftly "Take it, Don Cæſar: inſtead of reproaching let us compliment one another, my friend: you performed your part to admiration: and I did not behave amiſs in mine. What ſay you? confeſs that you took me for one of thoſe fine ladies of quality, who amuſe themſelves with intrigues."—"'Tis true (anſwered I) but whoſoever you are my queen, I have not changed my ſentiments with my dreſs: I beg you will accept my ſervices, and allow the valet de chambre of Don Matthias to finiſh that which Don Cæſar had ſo happily begun."—"Yes (ſaid ſhe) I love thee ſtill

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" ſtill better in thy own character than in " that of another: thou art juſt ſuch a man " as I am a woman, and that is the ſtrongeſt " approbation I can beſtow: I therefore re- " ceive thee into the crowd of my adorers; " we ſhall have no more occaſion for the mi- " niſtry of the old woman: for thou may'ſt " come hither with the utmoſt freedom: we " ladies of the ſtage live without conſtraint, " and helter-ſkelter with the men. The ef- " fects of this communication are ſometimes " very viſible indeed; but the town laughs " at them, and our buſineſs, thou knoweſt, " is to divert it."

Here we broke off, becauſe there were others preſent, and the converſation became general, ſprightly, joyous, and full of palpable double entendres. Every one bore a part; Arſenia's maid in particular, my lovely Laura, ſhone very much, and ſhowed a great deal more wit than virtue. On the other hand, our maſters and the actreſſes often burſt out into long fits of laughter, which we overheard, and from which we concluded that their diſcourſe was much of the ſame ſtamp with our own. If all the fine things which were ſaid that night at Arſenia's had been committed to writing, they would have compoſed, I believe, a treatiſe very inſtructive for youth. In the mean time, the hour of retreat, that is, the dawn arrived, and we were obliged to part. Clarino followed Don Alexo, and I went home with Don Matthias.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VI.

The converſation of ſome noblemen about the players in the prince's company.

THAT day, while my maſter was dreſſing, he received a billet from Don Alexo Segiar, deſiring his company at his houſe, whither he went, and found with him the Marquis of Zeneta, and another young nobleman of a good mein, whom I had never ſeen before. "Don Matthias (ſaid Segiar "to my maſter, preſenting the unknown ca-"valier) this is Don Pompeio de Caſtro, a "relation of mine, who has been at the court "of Portugal almoſt from his infancy: he "arrived at Madrid laſt night, and will ſet "out to-morrow for Liſbon, ſo that, as he "can ſpare me only one day, I am reſolved "to enjoy the precious opportunity, and, in "order to make it the more agreeable to him, "have called you and the Marquis of Zeneta "to my aſſiſtance." Upon this, my maſter and Don Alexo's kinſman embraced and complimented one another, and I was much pleaſed with the diſcourſe of Don Pompeio, who ſeemed to have a great ſhare of judgement and penetration.

Having dined at Segiar's, theſe noblemen amuſed themſelves at cards till the hour of going to the play; and then went all together to the prince's theatre, to ſee a new tragedy, intitled, The queen of Carthage. After the repre-

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repreſentation of the piece, they returned, and ſupped where they had dined: the converſation, at firſt, turning on the poem they had ſeen performed, and afterwards upon the actors. "As for the work itſelf (cried Don "Matthias) I have no great opinion of it; "it makes Æneas ſtill more inſipid than he "is repreſented in the Æneid; but every "body muſt agree it was divinely played. "What ſays Signor Don Pompeio? He does "not ſeem to be of my way of thinking."— "Gentlemen (ſaid that cavalier, ſmiling) I "have perceived you ſo much charmed with "your players, and, in particular, with your "actreſſes, that I ought not to be ſo bold as "to ſignify my diſſent from your opinions."— "You are much in the right (ſaid Don "Alexo, in a jocular manner) your cenſures "will be very unſeaſonable here; and you "ought to ſhow ſome reſpect for our actreſſes "before us, who are the trumpets of their "reputation. As we drink with them every "day, we can do no leſs than warrant them "perfect in their vocation; and even give "them certificates if there be occaſion for "it."—"I do not at all doubt it (anſwered "his relation) and I dare ſay you would do "the ſame for their morals, ſo much are you "their friends."

"Your comedians at Liſbon (ſaid the Mar- "quis of Zeneta, with a ſneer) are doubt- "leſs, much better than ours."—"Yes, cer- "tainly (replied Don Pompeio) at leaſt, there

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"are ſome of them who have no defect."—"And theſe (reſumed the Marquis) may depend upon your certificate."—"I have no connection with them (ſaid Don Pompeio) and, as I never enter into their parties of pleaſure, can judge of their merit without prejudice. But do you really (added he) think your company ſo excellent?"—"No, faith! (ſaid the Marquis) I believe no ſuch thing; and provided you give me leave to defend a very ſmall number of the players I will willingly give up all the reſt. Won't you allow that ſhe who played the part of Dido is an admirable actreſs? Did ſhe not repreſent the queen with all the dignity and grace which is conformable to the idea we have of her? and did not you admire her art in engaging the mind of the ſpectator, and making him feel the emotions of all thoſe paſſions that are expreſſed? She may be ſaid to be conſummately ſkilled in all the refinements of declamation."—"I agree (ſaid Don Pompeio) that ſhe knows how to awake and touch the paſſions of the audience; no player had ever more feeling, and, on the whole, her repreſentation is very fine. I was ſhocked with two or three things in her performance. When ſhe would expreſs ſurprize ſhe rolls her eyes in ſuch an extravagant manner, as very ill becomes the deportment of a princeſs. Add to this, that in raiſing her voice,

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" which is naturally low, ſhe corrupts the
" ſweetneſs of it, and produces a very diſ-
" agreeable croaking: beſides, in more places
" than one, ſhe gave reaſon to ſuſpect that
" ſhe did not very well underſtand her part:
" but, however, I am inclined to impute this
" rather to inattention than want of capa-
" city."

" By what I can ſee (ſaid Don Matthias
" to the critic) you will ſcarce write a pane-
" gyric on our actreſſes."—" Pardon me (re-
" plied Don Pompeio) I can diſcover great
" talents through their defects. I own I was
" enchanted with that actreſs who perform-
" ed the part of a chambermaid in the inter-
" ludes: ſhe has a fine genius, treads the
" ſtage gracefully, and every witticiſm ſhe
" utters is ſeaſoned with a ſarcaſtic ſmile,
" full of charms, which very much enhances
" the value of what is ſaid. She may, en-
" deed, be blamed for indulging her fire
" ſometimes a little too much, and tranſ-
" greſſing the bounds of modeſt aſſurance.
" But we muſt not be too ſevere; and I could
" only wiſh that ſhe would correct one bad
" habit ſhe has contracted. Oft-times, in the
" middle of a ſerious ſcene, ſhe interrupts the
" performance all of a ſudden, by yielding
" to a ſilly deſire of laughing, with which
" ſhe is ſeized. You'll ſay ſhe is applauded
" by the pit, even at theſe times: there, I
own, ſhe is lucky."

" Well,

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"Well, what do you think of the men? "(ſaid the Marquis, interrupting him) ſure- "ly you'll charge them full volley, ſince you "have been ſo unmerciful to the women."— "No (ſaid Don Pompeio) I think you have "ſome promiſing young actors; and am par- "ticularly pleaſed with that fat comedian "who acted the part of Dido's prime mi- "niſter: he repeats very naturally, and de- "claims juſt as they do in Portugal."—"If "he can pleaſe you (ſaid Segiar) you muſt "be charmed with the action of him who "played the part of Æneas. Is not he a "great comedian! an original!"—"Very ori- "ginal! (replied the critic) his cadence is "quite peculiar, and his tones abundantly "ſhrill: he almoſt always deſerts nature, "hurries over the words which contain the "ſentiment, and places the emphaſis where "it ſhould not be; making pauſes even on "articles and conjunctions. He diverted me "very much; particularly when he expreſſed "to his confidant the violence he did him- "ſelf in abandoning the princeſs; never was "grief more comically expreſſed."—"Soft- "ly couſin (replied Don Alexo) thou wilt "make us believe, by and by, that there is "not a great deal of taſte at the court of "Portugal. Doſt thou know that the actor "of whom we ſpeak is reckoned a phœnix? "Didſt thou not hear what claps of applauſe "he obtained? A plain proof that he is far "from being contemptible."—"That is no

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" proof at all (anſwered Don Pompeio.) Gen-
" tlemen (added he) let us not, I beg of you,
" lay any ſtreſs upon the applauſe of the
" pit, which is often beſtowed very unſea-
" ſonably:—nay, more ſeldom on true merit
" than on falſe, as Phædrus obſerves, by an
" ingenious fable, which I beg leave to re-
" peat. Here it is—

" The inhabitants of a certain city being
" aſſembled in public to ſee pantomimes,
" there was among the performers a favour-
" ite actor, whom they applauded every mo-
" ment. This buffoon, having a mind to
" cloſe the ſcene with a new kind of repre-
" ſentation, appeared alone upon the ſtage,
" ſtooped down, covering his head with his
" cloak, and ſqueaking like a pig, acquitted
" himſelf ſo well, that the audience actually
" imagined he had one under his clothes:
" they ordered him therefore to ſtrip; which
" he having done, and nothing appearing,
" the whole aſſembly thundered applauſe.—
" A peaſant who happened to be one of the
" ſpectators, ſhocked at theſe expreſſions of
" admiration, cried, "Gentlemen, you have no
" cauſe to be charmed with that buffoon,
" who is not ſuch an exquiſite actor as you
" imagine: I can play the pig better than he,
" and, if you doubt it, come hither again to-
" morrow at this hour. The people pre-
" poſſeſſed in favour of their pantomimes, re-
" aſſembled next day in greater numbers, ra-
" ther

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" ther to hiſs the peaſant than ſee what he " could do. The two rivals appearing on " the ſtage, the buffoon began, and was ap- " plauded more than ever: then the country- " man, ſtooping in his turn, and muffling his " head in his cloak, pinched the ear of a real " pig, which he held under his arm, and made " it ſqueak moſt piercingly; nevertheleſs, " the audience gave the preference to the pan- " tomime, and hooted the peaſant, who all " of a ſudden producing the pig to the ſpec- " tators, Gentlemen, ſaid he, it is not me " whom you hiſs, but this poor pig himſelf: " ſuch excellent judges you are!"

" Couſin (ſaid Alexo) thy fable is too ſe- " vere: but notwithſtanding thy pig, we will " not give up our opinion. Let us change " the diſcourſe (added he) I am tired of this " ſubject. So, thou wilt depart to-morrow, " in ſpite of my deſire to enjoy thy company " a little longer?"—" I wiſh I could make a " longer ſtay at Madrid (replied his kinſ- " man) but it is not in my power. I have " told you already, that I came to the court " of Spain about an affair of ſtate; and, at " my arrival yeſterday, had an audience of " the prime miniſter, whom I ſhall ſee again " to-morrow morning; immediately after " which I ſhall ſet out on my return to Liſ- " bon."—" Thou art become altogether Por- " tugueſe (ſaid Segiar) and in all likelihood " wilt never return to live in Madrid."—" I

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" believe I ſhall not (anſwered Don Pom-
" peio) for I am ſo happy as to be beloved by
" the king of Portugal, and enjoy a great
" deal of pleaſure at his court. But notwith-
" ſtanding his kindneſs to me, would you be-
" lieve that I have been on the point of quit-
" ing his dominions for ever?"—" Pray tell
" us the reaſon (ſaid Don Alexo.")—" With
" all my heart (anſwered Don Pompeio) and
" at the ſame time will relate the ſtory of
" my life."

CHAP. VII.

The hiſtory of Don Pompeio de Caſtro.

DON Alexo (added he) knows that while I was yet a little boy I reſolved to carry arms; and that, ſeeing our own country in profound peace, I went to Portugal, from whence I paſſed over into Africa with the Duke of Braganza, who gave me employment in the army under his command. Being a younger brother of very ſmall fortune, I was under a neceſſity of ſignalizing myſelf in ſuch a manner as to attract the notice of the general; and did my duty ſo well, that the duke promoted and put me into a condition to ſerve with honour. After a long war, the iſſue of which you all know, I attached myſelf to the court; and the king, upon the recommendation of the general officers, gratified me with a conſiderable penſion. Senſible of this monarch's generoſity, I loſt no occaſion of manifeſting my

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my gratitude by my aſſiduity; and was always in attendance at thoſe hours in which people are permitted to pay their reſpects; by which behaviour I inſenſibly acquired the love of that prince, who honoured me with new favours.

Having one day diſtinguiſhed myſelf at the ring, and a bull fight that preceeded it, the whole court commended my ſtrength and addreſs; and when I returned home, loaded with applauſe, I found a billet importing that a lady, the conqueſt of whom ought to flatter me more than all the honour I had that day acquired, wanted to converſe with me; and that I ſhould in the twilight repair to a certain place that was deſcribed. This letter gave me more pleaſure than all the praiſe I had received, and I imagined that the perſon who wrote it muſt be a lady of the firſt quality. You may eaſily gueſs that I flew to the rendezvous, where an old woman being in waiting, to ſerve as a guide, introduced me by a little garden-door into a great houſe, and ſhut me in a rich cloſet, ſaying, "Stay here until I inform my miſtreſs of your arrival." I perceived a great many curious things in this cloſet, which was enlightened by a great number of wax-candles; but my ſole view in conſidering its magnificence was to confirm myſelf in the opinion I had already conceived of the lady's rank. If all that I ſaw ſeemed to aſſure me ſhe was a perſon of the firſt quality, when ſhe appeared I was convinced of

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it, by her noble and majeſtic air. Nevertheleſs I was miſtaken.

"Signor cavalier (ſaid ſhe) after the advances I have made, it would be ridiculous to conceal the tender ſentiments I have for you, which, however, were not inſpired by that merit you have this day ſhown before the whole court. That has only haſtened the diſcovery: for I have ſeen you more than once, and enquired into your character, which pleaſed me ſo much that I determined to follow my inclination. Don't imagine, added ſhe, that you have made a conqueſt of ſome ducheſs. I am no other than the widow of a ſimple officer of the king's guards: but what makes your victory ſtill more glorious, is the preference I give you to one of the greateſt lords of the kingdom. The Duke of Almeyda is in love with me, and ſpares nothing to inflame me with a mutual paſſion; but hitherto he has been unſucceſsful, and I ſuffer his addreſſes only through vanity."

Though I found by her diſcourſe that I had to do with a coquet, I thought myſelf very much obliged to fortune for this adventure: Donna Hortenſia (ſo was the lady called) was ſtill in the prime of youth; and I was dazzled with her beauty: beſides, ſhe offered me the poſſeſſion of a heart which would not yield to the addreſſes of a duke. What a triumph was this for a young Spaniſh cavalier! I accordingly threw myſelf at her feet, thanked her for her goodneſs, ſaid all that a man of gallantry

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gallantry could utter on ſuch an occaſion, and ſhe had reaſon to be ſatisfied with the tranſports of my gratitude. We parted the beſt friends in the world, after having agreed to ſee one another every night on which ſhe ſhould be diſengaged from the Duke of Almeyda, and this ſhe promiſed to advertiſe me of punctually; in which ſhe did not fail; ſo that, in a word, I became the Adonis of this new Venus.

But the pleaſures of life are far from being eternal! Whatever meaſures the lady could take to conceal our correſpondence from my rival, he did not fail to get notice of the whole of what it was ſo much our intereſt to keep from his knowledge. A malcontent chamber-maid informed him of the affair; and that lord, naturally generous, but withal haughty, jealous, and paſſionate, was incenſed at my preſumption: rage and jealouſy took poſſeſſion of his ſoul; and following the dictates of his fury, he reſolved to avenge himſelf of me in an infamous manner. One night, while I was with Hortenſia, he waited for me at the little garden-door, attended by all his footmen, armed with clubs; and as ſoon as I came out, making theſe wretches ſeize me, ordered them to cudgel me to death. "Strike, ſaid he, and let the audacious villain periſh under your hands; for ſo am I reſolved to puniſh his inſolence." He had no ſooner ſpoke theſe words than his people aſſaulted me all together, and gave me ſo many blows, that I lay

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ſtretched upon the ground without ſenſe or motion. After which they retired with their maſter, who had regaled himſelf with this cruel execution; and I remained as they left me during the reſt of the night. At break of day ſome people happened to paſs, and perceiving ſtill ſome life in me, were ſo charitable as to carry me to the houſe of a ſurgeon: luckily my wounds were not mortal, and I fell into the hands of a ſkilful artiſt, who made a perfect cure of me in two months; at the end of which time, I repaired again to court, and reſumed my former way of living, ſave that I never went back to Hortenſia, who on her part took no ſtep to ſee me again, becauſe the duke on theſe terms had pardoned her infidelity.

My adventure being univerſally known, and nobody ſuſpecting my courage, every one was aſtoniſhed to ſee me as tranquil as if I had not received an affront; for I imparted my thoughts to no man breathing, and ſeemed to be void of all reſentment; ſo that people did not know what to think of my feigned inſenſibility. Some believed that, notwithſtanding my courage, the rank of my antagoniſt kept me in awe, and obliged me to digeſt the injury: others, with more reaſon, ſuſpected my ſilence, and looked upon the peaceful appearance I put on as a deceitful calm. Of this opinion was the king, who did not think me a perſon that would leave ſuch an outrage unpuniſhed; but believed that I would not fail

to

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to revenge myſelf as ſoon as I could find a favourable opportunity. That he might know whether or not he gueſſed my ſentiments aright, he called me one day into his cloſet, where he ſaid, "Don Pompeio, I know the accident which has happened to you, and am, I confeſs, ſurpriſed at your tranquillity, which muſt certainly be diſſimulation"—"Sire, I replied, I know not who was the aggreſſor, having been attacked in the dark by people unknown; ſo that I muſt conſole myſelf for the misfortune as well as I can."—"No, no, (ſaid the king) you muſt not think to dupe me with that evaſion, which is all diſſembled: I have been informed of the whole affair: the Duke of Almeyda has given you a mortal affront. You are a gentleman and a Caſtilian, and I know what theſe qualities oblige you to do. You have formed a reſolution to avenge yourſelf. Communicate your ſcheme to me. I inſiſt upon it, and don't be afraid that you ſhall have cauſe to repent of making me your confidant."

"Since your majeſty (anſwered I) command it, I will diſcover my ſentiments. Yes, Sire, I intend to take vengeance for the affront I have ſuffered. Every one who bears the name of a gentleman is accountable for it to his family. You know the unworthy treatment I have received; and I purpoſe to aſſaſſinate the Duke of Almeyda, to revenge myſelf in a manner ſuitable to the offence. I will plunge a poniard into his breaſt, or ſhoot him through

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through the head, and escape if I can into Spain. This is my design."—"It is a violent one (said the king) nevertheless I cannot condemn it, after the cruel outrage which the Duke of Almeyda has committed upon you. He is worthy of the chastisement you reserve for him: but do not execute your enterprise in a hurry. Leave it to me to find out an expedient for bringing you to an accommodation."—"Ah, Sir! (cried I, very much chagrined) why did you oblige me to reveal my secret? What expedient can—"—"If I don't find one to your satisfaction (said he, interrupting me) you may put your resolution in practice. I don't intend to abuse the confidence you have reposed in me, and will by no means betray your honour. So that you may make yourself easy on that score."

I was greatly at a loss to know in what manner the king intended to terminate the affair in an amicable manner: and this is the method he took. In a private conversation with the Duke of Almeyda, "My lord (said he) you "have injured Don Pompeio de Castro; and "as you are not ignorant of his being a man "of illustrious birth, and a gentleman whom "I love on account of his faithful services, "you ought to give him satisfaction."—"I am "not of an humour to refuse it; (answered "the duke) if he complains of my wrath, I "am ready to do him justice in the field."—"You must give him another sort of reparation (replied the king) a Spanish gentleman "under-

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"understands the point of honour too well "to fight openly with a secret assassin. I can "give you no other name, and you cannot "expiate the indignity of your action any "other way than by presenting your enemy "with a cane, and submitting to the retalia-"tion."—"O heavens! (cried the duke) What "Sir? would you have a man of my rank con-"descend to humble himself before a simple "cavalier, and allow himself to be caned?"—"No (replied the monarch) I will make Don "Pompeio promise that he will not strike you. "Only ask pardon for the violence you com-"mitted, and present him with a cane—that "is all I expect of you."—"And that is too "much to expect from me, Sir (said the "duke, interrupting him hastily,) I will ra-"ther continue exposed to the secret shafts "of his revenge."—"your life is dear to "me (said the king) and my desire is that "this affair may have no bad consequences. "To bring it to a conclusion the less disa-"greeable for you, I will be the only witness "to that satisfaction which I insist on your "making to the Spaniard."

The king had occasion for all his power over the duke, to bring him to this mortifying condescension. However, he succeeded; and afterwards sending for me, recounted the discourse he had with my enemy, and asked if I would be satisfied with the reparation agreed upon between them. "I answered in the affirma-"tive, and gave my word and honour, that,

"far

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" far from ſtriking the offender, I would not " even accept of the cane he ſhould preſent to " me." Things being regulated in this manner, the duke and I, one day, went at a certain hour to the king, who ſhutting himſelf up with us in the cloſet, " Come (ſaid he to the " duke) acknowledge your fault, and deſerve " to be forgiven." Upon this my enemy made his apology, and preſented me with the cane which he had in his hand. " Don Pompeio (ſaid the monarch to me, that inſtant) take the cane, and let not my preſence hinder you from ſatisfying your injured honour: I acquit you of the promiſe " you made, not to ſtrike the duke."—" No " Sir (anſwered I) it is ſufficient that he ſubmits to be beaten; an injured Spaniard aſks " no more."—" Well (replied the king) ſince " you are contented with that ſatisfaction, you " may now enjoy the privilege of a regular " proceſs: meaſure your ſwords and determine your quarrel like men of honour." " It is what I ardently deſire! (cried the Duke " of Almeyda, with precipitation) and that " alone is capable of conſoling me for the " ſhameful condeſcenſion I have made."

So ſaying, he went away full of rage and confuſion, and two hours after ſent to let me know that he waited for me in a private place. Thither I repaired, and found that lord in a humour to fight heartily. He was not quite forty, and wanted neither courage nor ſkill, ſo that the match was pretty equal. " Come,

" Don

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" Don Pompeio (ſaid he) let us decide our " difference here: both of us ought to be ex- " aſperated to the higheſt pitch; you, for the " treatment you have received at my hands; " and I, for having aſked your pardon." With theſe words he drew upon me ſo ſuddenly, that I had not time to make any reply; and puſhed with great vigour; but I had the good fortune to parry all his thruſts, and attacked him in my turn; when I found I had to do with an antagoniſt who knew how to defend as well as to aſſault; and I don't know what might have happened, if he had not made a falſe ſtep in retreating, and fallen backward. I ſtopped immediately, and bid him get up—and he anſwered, " Why do you ſpare " me? I am injured by your pity."—" I will " not wrong my glory ſo much (ſaid I) as to " take the advantage of your misfortune; get " up once more and let us fight it out."

" Don Pompeio (ſaid he, riſing) after this " inſtance of your generoſity, honour will not " permit me to uſe my ſword againſt you. " What would the world ſay of me ſhould I " kill you? I ſhould be looked upon as a " coward, who had taken the life of a perſon " who had it in his power to deprive me of " mine. I can, therefore, no longer, fight " againſt you, and I feel the warm tranſports " of gratitude ſucceed thoſe furious emotions " which reigned within my breaſt. Don Pom- " peio, added he, let our mutual hatred ceaſe. " Let us even go farther, and be friends."—

" Ah,

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" Ah, my lord, cried I, I embrace the agree-
" able propoſal with joy! I vow the moſt ſin-
" cere friendſhip: and as the firſt proof, pro-
" miſe never to ſet foot within the door of
" Donna Hortenſia, even though ſhe ſhould
" deſire to ſee me."—" It is I (ſaid he) who
" muſt yield that lady to you—You have a
" juſter title to her, ſince her inclination is
" fixed upon you."—" No, no! (cried I, in-
" terrupting him) you love her, and the fa-
" vours which ſhe might beſtow upon me
" would give you pain; I ſacrifice them
" therefore to your repoſe."—" Ah, too ge-
" nerous Caſtilian! (replied the duke, lock-
" ing me in his arms) I am charmed with
" your ſentiments! What remorſe do they
" produce within me! With what grief—with
" what ſhame do I reflect on the outrage you
" received! The ſatisfaction I gave you in the
" king's cloſet ſeems now too ſlight; I will
" make a better reparation for the injury, and
" in order to efface the diſhonour of it entirely,
" I offer one of my nieces to you in marriage;
" ſhe is a rich heireſs, not yet fifteen, and ſtill
" more beautiful than young."

I made my compliments to the duke in ſuch expreſſions of acknowledgements as the honour of entering into his alliance inſpired; and in a few days married his niece. The whole court congratulated him on his generoſity to a gentleman whom he had covered with ignominy; and my friends rejoiced with me on the happy concluſion of an adventure which

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Ansell Del. S. Springgalk - Sculp.

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which ſeemed to promiſe a more melancholy iſſue. Since that time, gentleman, I live agreeably at Liſbon, beloved by my wife, of whom I am ſtill fond; the Duke of Almeyda gives me every day freſh proofs of his friendſhip; and I dare boaſt of being pretty well with the King of Portugal; the importance of this my journey to Madrid, which I undertook by his order, being a ſufficient evidence of his eſteem.

CHAP. VIII.

By what accident Gil Blas was obliged to ſeek a new place.

SUCH was the ſtory that Don Pompeio recounted, and which the valet of Don Alexo, and I overheard, although they had taken the precaution of ſending us away before it was begun: but inſtead of retiring, we ſtopped at the door, which we had left half open, and from thence loſt not a word of what was ſaid. After this, the noblemen ſet in to drinking, but their debauch did not laſt till day; becauſe Don Pompeio, who was to attend the prime miniſter in the morning, was very deſirous of a little reſt. Accordingly, the Marquis of Zeneta and my maſter embracing that cavalier, bid him adieu, and left him with his kinſman.

We went to bed for this time before morn, and Don Matthias, when we waked, inveſted me with a new employment. "Gil Blas (ſaid

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(ſaid he) take paper and ink, and write two or three letters which I will dictate; henceforward thou art my ſecretary."—"Good (ſaid I to myſelf) another addition to my functions: as a lacquey, I follow my maſter every where; as a valet de chambre, help him to dreſs; and write under him as his ſecretary. Heaven be praiſed! I act, like Hecate, in a three fold capacity."—"Thou doſt not know, added he, what I am about; which is briefly this—But be ſecret—for thy life ſhall anſwer it. As I ſometimes meet with people who boaſt of their good fortune in love intrigues, I am reſolved, in order to excel them all, to have always in my pocket feigned letters from women, which I will read on ſuch occaſions. This will afford me ſome diverſion, and, more happy than thoſe of my fellows who acquire conqueſts only for the pleaſure of making them publick, I will publiſh thoſe which I have not had the trouble to make; but remember to diſguiſe thy hand in ſuch a manner, as that the billets may not appear to be written by the ſame perſon."

Upon this I took paper, pen, and ink, and ſat down to obey Don Matthias, who at firſt dictated a love-letter in theſe terms:

"YOU was not to-night at the place of "aſſignation. Ah, Don Matthias! what "can you ſay to juſtify yourſelf? How much "have I been miſtaken, and how well have I "been puniſhed for having the vanity to "think that you would ſacrifice all the amuſe-

"ments

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"ments and buſineſs of the gay world, to the "pleaſure of ſeeing Donna Clara de Men-"doza!"

The next billet he made me write was in the name of a lady, who preferred him to a prince; and the laſt from one who told him, that, if ſhe was ſure of his diſcretion, ſhe would make a voyage with him to the iſland of Cythera. He was not ſatisfied with dictating theſe fine epiſtles: he obliged me alſo to ſubſcribe them with the names of ladies of quality. Upon which I could not help obſerving, that I thought it a tickliſh affair; but he deſired me to keep my advice to myſelf, until he ſhould have occaſion to aſk it: I was therefore obliged to execute his commands in ſilence. This being done, he got up, dreſſed, put the letters in his pocket, aud went out; and I followed him to the houſe of Don Juan de Modeca, who had invited five or ſix gentlemen of his friends to dinner.

The entertainment was ſumptuous; and mirth, the beſt ingredient in all banquets, reigned during the repaſt. All the gueſts contributed to enliven the converſation; ſome by raillery, and others by recounting exploits of which they themſelves were the heroes. My maſter, unwilling to loſe ſuch a fair opportunity of profiting by the letters he had made me write, read them aloud, with ſuch an air of aſſurance, (that his ſecretary excepted) every body ſeemed to believe them genuine.—

Among

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Among the gentlemen before whom he was guilty of this effrontery, there was one Don Lope de Velaſco, a very ſedate man, who, inſtead of rejoicing like the reſt at the ſucceſs of the reader, coldly aſked, if the conqueſt of Donna Clara had coſt him dear?—"Almoſt "leſs than nothing (replied Don Matthias) "ſhe made all the advances. Having ſeen "me in the park I happened to pleaſe her; "upon which I was followed by her order, "and, as ſoon as ſhe learned who I was, ſhe "wrote to me, appointing an aſſignation at "her houſe in the night, when all the family "ſhould be a-bed. I obeyed the ſummons, "and was introduced to her apartment.—I "am too much of a gentleman to tell what "followed."

At this laconic detail the lord of Velaſco changed countenance, and it was not difficult to perceive what concern he had in the lady in queſtion. "All theſe billets (ſaid he, darting "a furious look at my maſter) are abſolutely "falſe, and eſpecially that which you boaſt of "having received from Donna Clara de Men-"doza, than whom there is not a more chaſte "young lady in Spain. A gentleman, no "ways your inferior either in birth or perſonal "merit, has done every thing in his power, "during two whole years, to make an im-"preſſion on her heart; and ſcarce has he "been able to obtain the moſt innocent fa-"vours, though he has reaſon to flatter him-"ſelf that if ſhe was capable of garnting any

"other

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"other kind of indulgence, it would be to "him alone."—"Hey-day! who ſays any "thing to the contrary? (ſaid Don Matthias, "with an air of raillery.)—I agree with you, "that ſhe is a lady of honour: and, for my "part, I am a young fellow of honour; con- "ſequently you ought to believe, that no- "thing which was not very honourable paſſed "between us."—"Ah! this is too much, "(cried Don Lope, interrupting him:) jeſt- "ing a-part, you are an impoſter. Donna "Clara never made an aſſignation with you at "night; and I will not ſuffer you to blacken "her reputation.—I ſhall ſay no more at pre- "ſent." Having thus expreſſed himſelf, he looked ſternly at the whole company, and re- tired in ſuch a manner as to make him believe that this affair would have very bad conſe- quences. My Maſter, who was brave enough for a lord of his character, deſpiſing the threats of Don Lope, "What a fool there "is! (cried he, burſting into a fit of laugh- "ter) your knight-errants pretended only to "maintain the beauty of their miſtreſſes; but "he, forſooth, muſt vindicate the chaſtity of "his. Now this to me ſeems ſtill more ex- "travagant."

Velaſco's retreat, which was in vain oppoſed by Moncada, did not at all diſturb the banquet: the cavaliers, without taking much notice of it, continued their mirth, and did not part till next morning at five o'clock, when my maſter and I went home to bed. I was over-

whelmed

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whelmed with drowſineſs, and hoped to enjoy a good ſleep; but I reckoned without my hoſt, or rather without our porter, who came and waked me an hour after, telling me that there was a young man at the gate, who wanted to ſpeak with me. "Ah! curſe thee "for a porter (cried I, yawning) doſt thou "conſider that I have juſt now gone to bed? "Tell the young man that I am aſleep, and "bid him return at another time."—"He "muſt ſpeak with you inſtantly (replied he) "for he aſſures me that the affair will admit "of no delay." At theſe words I got up, and putting on my breches and doublet only, went to the door, curſing all the way.—— "Friend (ſaid I to the young man who "waited for me) let me know, if you pleaſe, "what preſſing affair procures me the honour "of ſeeing you ſo early in the morning?"— "I have (anſwered he) a letter for Don Matthias, to be delivered into his own hand. "He muſt read it immediately; for it is of "the utmoſt conſequence to him: I beg you "will therefore ſhow me into his chamber." Thinking it treated on ſome very important affair, I took the liberty of waking my maſter: "I aſk pardon (ſaid I to him) for in"terrupting your repoſe; but the impor"tance—"—"What wouldſt thou have?" (cried he haſtily:) Upon which the young man who accompanied me, ſaid, "My lord, "I have a letter for you from Don Lope de "Velaſco." Don Matthias took, opened, and

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and having read it, ſaid to Don Lope's valet, "Hark'e, child, I would not get up before "noon to make one in the beſt party of plea-"ſure that ever was propoſed; judge, then, "if I ſhall riſe at ſix o'clock in the morning "to fight.—Thou may'ſt tell thy maſter, if "he will be in the ſame place half an hour "after twelve, I will meet him there." So ſaying, he ſunk down in his bed, and fell aſleep again with great expedition.

Between eleven and twelve he got up, and, dreſſing with great compoſure, went out, telling me he would diſpenſe with my attendance; but I was too curious to know the conſequence to obey him in this, and therefore walked at ſome diſtance behind him to St. Jerome's meadow, where I perceived Don Lopez de Velaſco, waiting for him in a reſolute manner. The better to obſerve them, I concealed myſelf, and, from afar, could ſee them meet, and begin to fight a moment after. The combat was long, each in his turn having puſhed his antagoniſt with great vigour and addreſs: but victory declared for Don Lopez, who run my maſter through the body, and, leaving him ſtretched upon the ground, made off, very well ſatisfied with the vengeance he had taken. I ran up to the unfortunate Don Matthias, whom I found without ſenſe, and almoſt without life. I was melted at the ſight, and could not help ſhedding tears at a death, of which I had been an involuntary inſtrument. —Notwithſtanding my grief, however, I did

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not forget my own little concerns; but returned home with all haſte, where (without ſpeaking a ſyllable of the matter) I made up a bundle of my clothes, among which I threw, by miſtake, ſome of my maſter's moveables; and when I had carried it to the barber's houſe, where I had left my intriguing ſuit, publiſhed through the whole city the fatal accident of which I was witneſs: I told it to every body who gave me the hearing, and, in particular, took care to inform Rodriguez of what had happened. He ſeemed leſs afflicted with the news, than buſied about the meaſures he was to take on this occaſion. Having aſſembled the ſervants, he ordered them to follow him; and, repairing in a body to St. Jerome's meadow, we took up our maſter, who, though he ſtill breathed, died in three hours after he was carried to his own houſe. Thus periſhed Don Matthias de Silva, for having taken it into his head to read forged love-letters at an unſeaſonable time.

CHAP. IX.

Of the perſon in whoſe ſervice he engaged, after the death of Don Matthias de Silva.

A Few Days after the funeral of Don Matthias, all his ſervants being paid and diſmiſſed, I fixed my abode in the houſe of the little barber, with whom I began to live in ſtrict friendſhip; and there I promiſed myſelf more pleaſure than with Melendez. As I did

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I did not want money, I was in no hurry to enquire about a new place: beſides, I was become nice on that point, and reſolved to ſerve none but the quality for the future; for which reaſon I intended to examine narrowly into whatever poſt ſhould occur, believing that there was none too good for me; ſo much did I then think the valet of a young nobleman preferable to all others.

In the mean time, until fortune ſhould preſent ſuch a family as I thought I deſerved, I imagined nothing could be more agreeable than to conſecrate my leiſure to my handſome Laura, whom I had not ſeen ſince that night when we were both ſo pleaſantly undeceived. I durſt not dreſs in the ſuit of Don Cæſar de Ribera, which (unleſs I had aſſumed it for a diſguiſe) would have made me paſs for a downright madman: but my own was ſtill very decent, and being very well equipped in ſtockings, ſhoes, and hat, I adjuſted myſelf, with the barber's aſſiſtance, in a middle way between Don Cæſar and Gil Blas, and in this condition repaired to Arſenia's houſe; where, finding her alone, in the ſame parlour where I had ſeen her before, ſhe no ſooner perceived me than ſhe cried, "Ha! are you there? I "thought I had loſt you. Seven or eight "days are paſſed ſince I gave you the per-"miſſion of viſiting me: I ſee you don't "abuſe the liberties in which the ladies in-"dulge you."

I excuſed myſelf on account of my maſter's

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death, and the buſineſs in which I had been engaged; and added in a very polite manner, that even in the midſt of all my cares, the fair Laura had ſtill kept poſſeſſion of my heart. "Well, then (ſaid ſhe) I will reproach you "no more; but own, that I had alſo thought "of you: and as ſoon as I heard of the mis-"fortune of Don Matthias, formed a project "which, perhaps, will not diſpleaſe you.— "Some time ago I heard my miſtreſs ſay, "that ſhe wanted to have a kind of ſteward "in the houſe; a young man who ſhould un-"derſtand œconomy, and keep an exact ac-"count of the money diſburſed for houſe-"keeping. I have caſt my eyes on your lord-"ſhip, and believe you would not be an im-"proper perſon for that employment."—"I "perceive (anſwered I) that I ſhould acquit "myſelf in it to a wonder; for I have read "Ariſtotle's Oeconomics; and as to keeping "accounts, it is my chief excellence. But, "child (added I) there is one objection to my "engaging in Arſenia's ſervice."—"What "may that be?" (ſaid Laura)——"I have "ſworn (I replied) never to ſerve a plebeian: "nay, I have ſworn by Styx; and if Jupiter "himſelf durſt not violate that oath, judge "if a valet ought not to regard it."—"Whom "doſt thou call plebeians? (ſaid the charm-"bermaid with an air of diſdain.) Doſt thou "rank actreſſes with the wives of counſellors "and attornies? Know, friend, that the "ladies of the ſtage are not only noble, but "arch-

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" arch noble, by the alliance they contract " with men of quality."

" If that be the caſe, my princeſs (ſaid I) " I may accept of the place for which you " have deſtined me, without derogating from " the dignity of my reſolution."—" Certain- " ly (ſhe replied) to paſs from the family of " a beau into the ſervice of a theatrical he- " roine, is ſtill to maintain the ſame ſphere " of life; for we rank in all reſpects with the " quality: we keep equipages like them; we " live as well; and, at bottom, ought to hold " the ſame eſteem in civil life. Really (ad- " ded ſhe) if we conſider a marquis and a " player, through the courſe of a day, we ſhall " find them upon a pretty equal footing; for, " granting that the marquis, during three " parts of the day, is, by virtue of his blood, " ſuperior to the player; the actor, during " the remaining part, is raiſed ſtill more above " the marquis by the cue of an emperour or " king whom he repreſents. This, in my " opinion, inveſts us with ſuch nobility and " grandeur as at leaſt equals us to the people " at court."—" O! truly (I replied) you are, " without contradiction, on a level with the " courtiers. What the duce! players, I find, " are not ſuch ſcums as I imagined; and you " fire me with an inclination to ſerve ſuch ho- " nourable people."—" Well, then (ſaid ſhe) " come back again in two days: I aſk no " more time to diſpoſe my miſtreſs for thy " reception. I will ſpeak to her in thy be-

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" half; and as I have ſome intereſt with her,
" I am perſuaded that thou wilt be admitted
" into her ſervice."

I thanked Laura for her friendſhip, and aſſured her that I was penetrated with gratitude, which I expreſſed with ſuch tranſports as left her no room to doubt my ſincerity. We maintained a pretty long converſation together, and it would have laſted longer, had not a little page come to tell my princeſs that Arſenia wanted her; upon which we parted. I quitted the houſe of this actreſs, in the ſweet hope of living in it at my eaſe in a very ſhort time; and did not fail to return at the time appointed. " I was juſt expecting thee (ſaid
" Laura) in order to aſſure thee that thou
" art now one of the houſehold: come, fol-
" low me, and I will preſent thee to my miſ-
" treſs." So ſaying, ſhe carried me into an apartment, compoſed of five or ſix rooms of a floor, each more richly furniſhed than the other.

Heavens! what luxury and magnificence! I believed myſelf in the palace of a vice-queen; or rather thought I ſaw all the riches in the world amaſſed together in one place: for there was variety of things produced in different nations; and one might term this apartment the temple of ſome goddeſs, to whom every traveller preſented an offering of the rarities of his country.—I perceived the divinity ſeated on a large ſattin couch, charming to the eye, and ſleek with the ſteams of ſacrifice:

ſhe

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ſhe was in a genteel diſhabille, and her fair hands were buſy in preparing a new head-dreſs, in which ſhe was to perform that night. "Madam (ſaid her maid) here is the houſe-"keeper I mentioned. I can aſſure you, that "you will not find one more for your pur-"poſe." Arſenia looked at me very attentively, and I had the good fortune to pleaſe her. "Aha! Laura (cried ſhe) there's a "pretty young fellow. I foreſee that I ſhall "be very well ſatisfied with him." Then addreſſing herſelf to me "Child (ſaid ſhe) "I like your appearance, and am at a word: "if you ſerve me well, you ſhall have no "cauſe to complain." I anſwered, that my whole ſtudy and endeavour ſhould be to pleaſe her: and ſeeing that we were agreed, went to fetch my clothes, and was inſtalled in my new office.

CHAP. X.

Which is as ſhort as the foregoing.

IT being near play-time, my miſtreſs bid Laura and me follow her to the theatre. We went accordingly to her tiring-room, where ſhe put off her ordinary dreſs, and took another more magnificent for her appearance on the ſtage. The curtain being drawn, Laura conducted and ſat down by me in a place where we could both ſee and hear the actors perfectly well. I was diſguſted at the greateſt part of them, doubtleſs becauſe Don Pompeio

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had prejudiced me againſt them. Several, however, were very much applauded, and among theſe, even ſome who put me in mind of the fable of the pig.

Laura told me the names of all the actors and actreſſes as they preſented themſelves; and, not contented with this, the ſatyrical baggage deſcribed their characters nicely, as they appeared. "This here (ſaid ſhe) is a "noodle. That fellow is a brute: and that "minx whom you ſee, with an air more lewd "than engaging, is called Roſarda; a very "bad acquiſition for the company! ſhe ſhould "be enrolled in the troop that is raiſing by "order of the vice-roy of new Spain, to be "tranſported forthwith into America. Ob-"ſerve that luminous conſtellation advancing: "that fair ſetting ſun, known by the name of "Caſtilda: if ſhe has exacted a ſtone from "each of her lovers, as a princeſs of Egypt "is ſaid to have done heretofore, ſhe could "have raiſed a pyramid which would have "touched the third heaven." In ſhort, Laura gave no quarter: her malicious tongue did not even ſpare her own miſtreſs.

Nevertheleſs, I will confeſs my weakneſs: I was charmed with my chamber-maid, though her character was not morally good. She ſatyrized ſo agreeably, that I was even in love with her malice. Between the acts ſhe got up, to go and ſee if Arſenia wanted her; but inſtead of returning immediately to her place, ſhe amuſed herſelf behind the ſcenes, in liſten-

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ing to the ſoft things that were ſaid by the men who flattered her. I followed her, for once, to obſerve, and perceived that ſhe had a great many acquaintances; having reckoned no leſs than three actors, who, one after another, ſtopped to ſpeak with her, and ſeemed to treat her with great familiarity. This was not at all agreeable to me, who feeling, for the firſt time, what is was to be jealous, returned to my ſeat ſo penſive and melancholy, that Laura obſerved it as ſoon as ſhe came back. "What is the matter with thee, Gil "Blas? (ſaid ſhe with ſurprize.) What "gloomy demon has taken poſſeſſion of thee "ſince I went away? Thou ſeemeſt ſad and "dejected."—"I have too much reaſon to "be ſo, my princeſs (anſwered I;) you have "a little too much vivacity in your behavi-"our: I have obſerved you with the actors."—"A pleaſant cauſe of melancholy, indeed! "(ſaid ſhe, laughing) How! does that give "thee any uneaſineſs? Truly thou art a mere "novice: but thou wilt ſee a great many "other ſtrange things among us, and muſt "accuſtom thyſelf to our eaſy way of life.—"Harbour no jealouſy, child; for that, among "comedians is looked upon as ridiculous; "therefore we have none of it. Fathers, "huſbands, brothers, uncles, and couſins, "with us, are the moſt complaiſant perſons "on earth, and generally make ſettlements "for their own family."

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After having exhorted me to take umbrage at nothing, but look upon every thing with compoſure, ſhe declared that I was the happy mortal who had found the way to her heart; and aſſured me, that her love ſhould always reſt on me alone. On this aſſurance, which however I might have diſtruſted, without the imputation of being too ſuſpicious, I promiſed never more to be alarmed, and kept my word; for that very evening I ſaw her in cloſe converſation, and heard her laugh heartily with ſeveral different men. When the play was over, we went home with our miſtreſs, where Florimonda ſoon after arrived, with three old noblemen and an actor, to ſupper. Beſides Laura and me, there were of ſervants in the houſe, a cookmaid, a coachman, and a page, who all joined in preparing for ſupper. The cook, who was no leſs dexterous than Dame Jacinta, was aſſiſted by the coachman in dreſſing the victuals, while the chambermaid and page laid the cloth, and I furniſhed the beaufet with the fineſt plate and ſeveral cups of gold, which were offered to the goddeſs of the temple. I ſtored it likewiſe with bottles of the choiceſt wines, ſerving in my own perſon as cup-bearer, to ſhow my miſtreſs that I could turn my hand to every thing. The deportment of the actreſſes, during the repaſt, filled me with admiration: they aſſumed airs of importance, and imagined themſelves women of the firſt rank. Far from addreſſing the noblemen with the title of your excellence, they

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they did not even give them that of your lordſhip; but called them ſimply by their names: true, indeed, theſe very noblemen had ſpoiled and made them ſo vain by ſuffering them to be ſo familiar.—As for the actor, he, like a player uſed to perform the hero, treated them without ceremony, drank to their health, and maintained (as one may ſay) the upper end of the table. "Upon my ſoul, "(ſaid I to myſelf) when Laura demonſtrated "the quality of the marquis and player in "the day time, ſhe might have added that "they are ſtill more ſo in the night, ſince "they ſpend it thus in drinking together."

Arſenia and Florimonda being naturally wanton, a thouſand hardy expreſſions eſcaped them, mingled with ſmall favours and toyings which were exquiſitely reliſhed by theſe old ſinners. While my miſtreſs amuſed the one with a little innocent ribaldry, her friend, ſitting between the other two, did not act the Suſanna with them. While I was conſidering this picture, which had but too many charms for a young fellow like me, the deſſert was brought in: upon which I ſat wine and glaſſes on the table, and went to ſupper with Laura, who waited for me. "Well, Gil Blas, "(ſaid ſhe) what is thy opinion of thoſe noble-"men thou haſt ſeen?"—"They are doubt-"leſs (anſwered I) adorers of Arſenia and "Florimonda."—"No, (ſaid ſhe) they are "old letchers, who viſit coquets without at-"taching themſelves to them, and aſk only

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" ſmall compliances, paying generouſly for the
" trifling favours they receive. Thank hea-
" ven! Florimonda and my miſtreſs are at
" preſent without lovers; I mean ſuch lovers
" as aſſume the huſband, and want to engroſs
" all the pleaſure of the houſe, becauſe they
" ſupport the expence of it. As for my own
" part, I am very glad it is ſo; and maintain
" that a coquet of ſenſe ought to fly theſe ſort
" of engagements. Why ſhould ſhe give up
" her liberty to a maſter? 'Tis better to ac-
" quire an equipage penny by penny, than
" have one at ſuch a price."

When Laura was in a ſpeaking humour, (which was almoſt always the caſe) words coſt her nothing.—Heaven! what a volubility of tongue was ſhe miſtreſs of! She told me a thouſand adventures which had happened to the actreſſes of the prince's company; and I concluded from her diſcourſe, that I could not be in a better ſituation to become perfectly acquainted with vice. I was unhappily of an age when this does not create much horror; and beſides, the chambermaid painted theſe irregularities ſo artfully, that I beheld only the delicious ſide of them. She had not time to relate the tenth part of the exploits of the actreſſes; for ſhe had ſpoke but three hours, when the noblemen and player withdrew with Florimonda, whom they conducted to her own houſe.

After they were gone, my miſtreſs giving me money, ſaid " There, Gil Blas, are ten
" piſtoles

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" piſtoles to go to market to-morrow morn-
" ing: five or ſix of our gentlemen and ladies
" are to dine with me, ſo that you muſt take
" care, and have every thing in plenty."—
" Madam (anſwered I) with this ſum I'll
" engage to entertain the whole troop."—
" Friend (replied Arſenia) be ſo good as to
" correct your expreſſions: you muſt not call
" them the troop but the company. We
" ſay a troop of thieves, a troop of beggars,
" and a troop of authors; but learn to ſay a
" company of comedians. The corps of ac-
" tors in Madrid, eſpecially, deſerve to be
" called a company." I aſked pardon for having uſed ſuch a diſreſpectful term, and moſt humbly begged ſhe would excuſe my ignorance; proteſting that, for the future, whenſoever I ſhould mention the gentlemen actors of Madrid in a collective manner, I would always call them the company.

CHAP. XI.

How the players lived together, and their treatment of authors.

I Went to market next morning, in order to begin my office of butler; and as it was a meagre-day, bought, by order of my miſtreſs, ſome good fat pullets, rabbits, partridges, and other wild fowl; for as the gentlemen-players were not altogether ſatisfied with the behaviour of the church towards them, they did not think proper to adhere ſcrupulouſly to its com-

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commandments.—I brought home more victuals than would have ſufficed twelve honeſt gentlemen, during three days in carnival-time; ſo that the cook had work enough for the whole morning. While ſhe prepared the dinner, Arſenia got up, and remained at her toilet till noon, when Signors Roſimiro and Ricardo (two actors) arrived; Conſtantia and Celinaura (two actreſſes) came ſoon after: and at laſt Florimonda appeared, accompanied by a man who had all the appearance of a finiſhed coxcomb. His hair was tied behind in a very foppiſh manner, his hat adorned with a plume of green feathers, his breeches ſmooth and ſtraight, and his ſhirt, which was very fine, was embroidered with a handſome lace, diſplayed at the ſlaſhes of his doublet. His gloves and handkerchief were contained within the hilt of his ſword, and he wore his cloak with a grace altogether peculiar.

Though he had a good mein, and was very well made, I no ſooner ſaw him than remarking in him ſomething ſingular, I ſaid to myſelf, "This gentleman muſt certainly be an origi-"nal." I was not miſtaken; for he was a man of a very extraordinary character. As ſoon as he entered Arſenia's apartment, he ran with open arms and embraced the actreſſes and actors, one after another, with geſtures ſtill more extravagant than thoſe of the beaus. My opinion was not changed when I heard him ſpeak; for he made affected pauſes, and pronounced his words with great emphaſis, accommodating

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commodating his looks and geſtures to the ſubject. Having aſked Laura who that gentleman was, " I don't wonder (ſaid ſhe) at thy " curioſity: it is impoſible to ſee and hear " Signor Carlos Alonſo de la Ventoleria, " even for once, without feeling the ſame " emotion. I will deſcribe him to the life. " In the firſt place, he has been à player; but " quitted the ſtage through whim, and now " repents in earneſt. His black hair, which " thou ſeeſt, is dyed as well as his eye-brows " and whiſkers; for he is older than Saturn: " but as his parents, when he was born, neg- " lected to have his name inſerted in the pa- " riſh regiſter, he takes the advantage of their " omiſſion, and calls himſelf younger than he " is by twenty good years at leaſt. He is, " moreover the moſt ſelf-conceited man in " Spain, though he ſpent the firſt ſixty years " of his life in the groſſeſt ignorance; but in " order to become learned, he employed a pre- " ceptor, who has taught him to ſpell in La- " tin and Greek. Beſides, he has got an in- " finite number of good ſtories by heart, which " he has repeated, and vouched ſo often, " that at length he actually believes them to " be true. Theſe he brings into converſa- " tion, and one may ſay, that his wit ſhines at " the expence of his memory. He has the cha- " racter of being a great actor, and I piouſly " believe it; but nevertheleſs I will own that " he does not pleaſe me. I hear him repeat " ſometimes in company, and among other faults,

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" faults think his pronunciation too much
" affected, and his voice ſo quavering that it
" gives an antic and ridiculous air to his de-
" clamation."

Such was the picture that my ſweet-heart drew of this honorary ſtage player, who was really in his deportment the moſt haughty mortal I had ever ſeen. He played the orator too, and did not fail to produce from his budget two or three ſtories, which he uttered with a ſtudied air of ſolemnity. On the other hand, the actreſſes and actors, who did not come there to hold their tongues, were not ſilent; but began to talk of their abſent comrades, not in a very charitable manner indeed: but this muſt be pardoned in players as well as in authors. The converſation, therefore, kindling againſt their neighbours, " You cannot gueſs,
" ladies (ſaid Roſimiro) a new piece of fineſſe,
" of our dear confederate Ceſarino. He this
" morning purchaſed ſilk ſtockings, ribbons,
" and lace, which he ordered a page to bring
" to the rehearſal, as if ſent by a certain
" counteſs."—" Such a piece of knavery! (ſaid
" Signor de Ventoleria, with a ſilly, vain ſim-
" per) there was no ſuch deceit in my time:
" we never dreamt of compoſing ſuch ſtories:
" the ladies of quality, indeed, ſpared us the
" invention by making the purchaſe them-
" ſelves: it was their fancy."—" Zooks!
" (ſaid Ricardo) they have that fancy ſtill;
" and was I permitted to explain myſelf—
" but one muſt be ſilent on theſe ſort of ad-
" ventures,

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" ventures, especially when persons of cer-
" tain rank are concerned."

" Gentlemen (said Florimonda, interrupt-
" ing him) truce with your intrigues, if you
" please; they are very well known to all the
" world, and let us talk of Imenia. They say
" that nobleman who has spent so much mo-
" ney upon her, has left her at last."—" Yes,
" truly (cried Constantia) and I'll tell you
" more; she has lost a little citizen, whom she
" certainly would have ruined. I know the
" foundation of the whole affair: her Mer-
" cury committed a terrible blunder, by car-
" rying to the nobleman a letter she had wrote
" to the citizen, and giving this last the billet
" intended for the lord."—" These are great
" losses, my dear (replied Florimonda.")——
" Oh! as for the nobleman (said Constantia)
" there is no great matter; he has spent al-
" most his whole estate: but the citizen had
" just began his career, and had never passed
" thro' good hands, which is a thousand pities."

In this manner they discoursed before dinner, and their conversation turned on the same subjects while they were at table. But as I should never have done, if I undertook to repeat all the expressions full of malice and folly which I heard, I hope the reader will excuse me for suppressing them, in order to describe the reception of a poor devil of an author, who came in towards the end of the repast.

Our page came, and said aloud to his mistress, " Madam, a man in marvellous foul
" linen,

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" linen, bedaggled all over, and who, ſo pleaſe " you, looks very much like a poet, wants to " ſpeak with you."—" Show him up (an- " ſwered Arſenia) don't ſtir, gentlemen, 'tis " but an author." Sure enough it was one, whoſe tragedy had been received, and who brought a part for my miſtreſs. He was called Pedro de Moya, and, as he entered, made five or ſix profound bows to the company, who neither got up, nor returned his compliment. Arſenia only anſwered his profuſion of civility by a ſlight inclination of her head. He advanced into the room, trembling and confuſed, and let his gloves and cloak fall, which having taken up, he approaced my miſtreſs, and preſented to her a paper, with more reſpect than that of a counſellor, when he delivers a petition to a judge; ſaying, " Be ſo good, " Madam, as to accept of this part, which I " take the liberty to offer." She received it in a cold and diſdainful manner, without even deigning to anſwer his compliment.

This, however, did not diſcourage our author, who making uſe of this opportunity to diſtribute the different parts of his play, gave one to Roſimiro, and another to Florimonda, who did not treat him a whit more courteouſly than Arſenia had done. On the contrary, the player, naturally very obliging, as theſe gentlemen commonly are, inſulted him with the moſt cutting raillery, which Pedro de Moya felt, but durſt not retort, leſt his piece ſhould ſuffer for his impudence. He retired,

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retired, therefore, without ſpeaking, but ſenſibly touched, as I perceived, with his reception; and I believe, that, in the bitterneſs of his reſentment, he did not fail to curſe within himſelf the players, as they deſerved; and they, when he was gone, began to ſpeak of authors with great reſpect. "Signor Pedro "de Moya (ſaid Florimonda) did not ſeem "to go away well ſatisfied."

"Pſhaw, Madam (cried Roſimiro) don't "diſturb yourſelf about that: authors are not "worth notice; if we ſhould treat them on "an equal footing, it would ſpoil them. I "know theſe ſorry gentlemen; they would "ſoon forget themſelves. Let us, therefore, "uſe them like ſlaves, and we need not fear "that we ſhall tire their patience: for though "their diſpleaſure may detach them from us "ſometimes, the fury of writing will bring "them back, and they will think themſelves "very happy, provided we deign to act their "performances."—"You are in the right "(ſaid Arſenia) we only loſe thoſe authors "whoſe fortunes we have made, for as ſoon "as we have procured a good ſettlement for "them, idleneſs takes poſſeſſion of them, and "they work no more. Luckily the company "don't break their hearts, and the public is "no loſer by their ſloth."

Theſe fine obſervations were much applauded, and it was determined, that authors, notwithſtanding the ill-treatment they receive, owed their all to the players, who, therefore, claimed

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claimed the ſuperiority over them, and certes they could not diſpiſe them more.

CHAP. XII.

Gil Blas acquires the theatrical taſte, abandons himſelf to the pleaſures of a comic life, with which, however, he is diſguſted in a little time.

THE company remained at table until the hour arrived of going to the theatre, whither they repaired in a body. I followed, and once more ſaw the play, which gave me ſuch pleaſure, that I reſolved to take the ſame opportunity every day. In this I did not fail, and inſenſibly became reconciled to the actors; ſuch is the force of cuſtom: I was particularly charmed with thoſe who ranted and diſtorted themſelves moſt upon the ſtage, and was not at all ſingular in this way of thinking.

The beauty of the performance touched me no leſs than the manner of repreſentation: I was quite tranſported with ſome of them; and among the reſt was prodigiouſly fond of thoſe were all the cardinals, or the twelve peers of France, appeared. I remember that in two days I got by heart a whole comedy, entitled, The Queen of Flowers. The Roſe, who was queen, had the Violet for her confidante, and the Jeſſamine for her uſher. I thought nothing could be more ingenious than theſe works, which I imagined did a great deal of honour to the taſte of our nation.

I not only adorned my memory with the brighteſt paſſages from theſe dramatic maſter-pieces;

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pieces; I ſet about bringing my taſte to perfection; which to accompliſh, I liſtened with a greedy attention to all that the players ſaid. If they praiſed any performance, I eſteemed it; and whatſoever met with their diſapprobation was immediately deſpiſed by me. I thought they were as ſkilful in plays as jewellers are in diamonds. Nevertheleſs, Pedro de Moya's tragedy had great ſucceſs, although they had prognoſticated its damnation. But even this could not make me ſuſpect their judgement; and I choſe rather to believe that the public wanted common ſenſe, than to doubt of the company's infallibility. I was aſſured, however, from all quarters, that thoſe new pieces of which the players had no good opinion were uſually very much applauded; and that, on the contrary, thoſe which they received with approbation were commonly hiſſed by the audience. I was told that it was a maxim with them to judge irroneouſly of the works that were preſented to them; and was informed of a thouſand inſtances where the ſucceſs belied their determination; but all theſe proofs were ſcarce ſufficient to diſabuſe my underſtanding.

I ſhall never forget what happened one day in the firſt repreſentation of a new comedy, which the players had pronounced cold and tedious, and actually thought unpaſſable. In theſe ſentiments they performed the firſt act, that met with great applauſe, which quite aſtoniſhed them. The ſecond act was played, and

ſtill

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ſtill better received than the firſt: upon which the actors were confounded. "How the devil! "(ſaid Roſimiro) is it poſſible that this comedy "ſhould take?" At laſt they acted the third, which gave more pleaſure than the two former. "I can't comprehend the meaning of this (ſaid "Ricardo;) we imagined that this piece would "not pleaſe, yet every body is charmed with "it."—"Gentlemen (ſaid one of them very "plainly) the reaſon is, becauſe there are a "thouſand ſtrokes of wit in the performance, "which we have not obſerved."

I no longer, therefore, looked upon the players as excellent judges, but became a juſt appraiſer of their merit: and, indeed, they juſtified to a tittle all the ridicule they met with from the world: for ſome of the actors and actreſſes were giddy with applauſe; and conſidering themſelves as objects of admiration, thought they beſtowed a favour on the public, when they deigned to play. I was ſhocked at their faults, but unhappily too well pleaſed with their way of life; ſo that I plunged into debauchery. How could it be otherwiſe? Their converſation was pernicious to youth, and all I ſaw contributed to corrupt my morals: had I been ignorant of what paſſed at the houſes of Caſilda, Conſtantia, and the other players, that of Arſenia's alone was but too capable of undoing me: for, beſides the old noblemen I mentioned, there came thither beaus, young heirs whom uſurers enabled to ſpend money, and ſometimes, alſo, farmers of the

revenue

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revenue were admitted, who far from being gratified for their preſence, as they are in their own aſſemblies, were obliged to pay through the noſe for their reception.

Florimonda, who lived hard by, dined and ſupped every day with my miſtreſs; and people were ſurpriſed at the friendſhip that ſeemed to unite them. It afforded matter of aſtoniſhment to ſee coquets live together in ſuch good intelligence; and every body imagined that, ſoon or late, they would quarrel about ſome gallant. But the world was very much miſtaken in theſe perfect friends, who were joined by the moſt ſolid affection. Inſtead of being jealous of one another, like other women, they lived in common; and choſe rather to ſhare the ſpoils than fooliſhly diſpute about the inclinations of the men.

Laura, by the example of theſe illuſtrious aſſociates, made the beſt of her youth too: and it was not without reaſon ſhe had told me that I ſhould ſee ſtrange things: however, I affected to be quite eaſy; becauſe I had promiſed to adopt the unconcern of a player on ſuch occaſions; and thus I diſſembled for ſome days, contenting myſelf with aſking the names of the men with whom I found her particularly engaged. She always anſwered, that it was an uncle or couſin. Heavens! what a crowd of relations ſhe had! Sure her family was more numerous than that of King Priam: and the jade did not even confine herſelf to her uncles and couſins, but alſo went abroad fre-

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frequently in order to allure ſtrangers, by acting the widow of quality at the houſe of the old woman whom I mentioned before. In ſhort, Laura (to give the reader a juſt and preciſe idea of her) was as young, as handſome, and as much a coquet as her miſtreſs, who had no other advantage over her, than that of diverting the town in public. I was borne down by the torrent for three weeks, during which I gave myſelf up to all manner of debauchery: but at the ſame time, I muſt obſerve, in the midſt of my pleaſures, I was frequently ſeized with ſentiments of remorſe that proceeded from my education, and embittered all my enjoyments. Vice could not get the better of theſe warnings, which augmented in proportion as I became more debauched, and by the effect of a happy diſpoſition, I began to abhor the diſorders of a theatrical life. "Ah, wretch! (ſaid I to myſelf) is it thus thou fulfilleſt the expectation of thy family? Was it not enough to cheat it by chooſing another employment than that of a tutor? Does thy ſervile condition hinder thee from living like an honeſt man? or does it become thee to live among ſuch ſinners? ſome of whom are poſſeſſed by envy, rage, and avarice; whilſt others have baniſhed all ſenſe of ſhame. Theſe are abandoned by intemperance and ſloth; and thoſe indulge their pride even to an exceſs of inſolence. I am reſolved, and will no longer dwell with the ſeven deadly ſins."

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.

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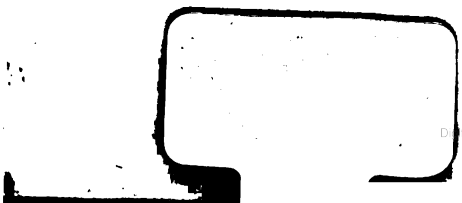

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